No. 02062

THE STING

Final Draft Screenplay

by

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dc #02062

THE STING

FADE IN

A white on black TITLE appears in the lower left hand corner of the screen:

S E P T E M B E R 1 5 , 1 9 3 6 (X)

FADE OUT

FADE IN

1 EXT. A SLUM AREA OF JOLIET - DAY

It's a bleak, windy morning, the kind that clears the streets of all but the winos (who carry their own heaters), and the point-men for juvenile gangs. We pick up a solitary figure, Joe Mottola, coming down the street and entering what appears to be an abandoned tenement. He pauses a second to dust his white-winged alligator shoes on the back of his pants legs. Sharply dressed and surrounded by the aura of one who is making money for the first time and broadcasting it on all bands, he seems an incongruity in this part of town.

We follow him up a flight of rickety stairs to a second floor flat. He knocks on the door, is admitted by a cautious doorman.

2 INT. NUMBERS SPOT - DAY

Suddenly we are plunged into a room of chattering, clamoring people. This is a spot for the numbers racket, a place immune from legal interference, where any sucker can bet on a number between 1 and 1000 in the hope of getting the 600 to 1 payoff that goes to those few who guess right. The bettors are queued up in several lines before a long table, where they place their bets and are given receipts in return. Others wait at a cashier's window to pick up previous earnings or to ask for credit.

Mottola moves through the crowd to a back room where betting slips are being sorted and money counted under the watchful and somewhat impatient gaze of a Supervisor, an older man named Mr. Granger. The Yankee-White Sox game is heard on the radio in the background.

Mottola noticing that his entrance has aroused little interest, saunters over to the Phone Girl and gives her a little pinch on the cheek. The girl slaps his hand away, obviously having been through this before.

PHONE GIRL
Beat it, Mottola.

Granger glances up and exchanges a token nod with Mottola, who plops down in a folding chair next to the radio. The phone rings.

PHONE GIRL
8720...Yes, hold on a second.
(calling over to the Supervisor)
Mr. Granger, Chicago on the line.

Granger is a little apprehensive about talking to Chicago, but takes the phone anyway.

GRANGER
Yeh?

CUT TO

3 INT. A WATERFRONT PROCESSING PLANT - CHICAGO - DAY

A flabby, bald man named Combs is on the other end of the line. Visible beyond the door and interior window of his office is a large room, cluttered with tables, typewriters, clerks and adding machines. This room is the clearinghouse for all the transaction of the numbers game. All the betting slips and income from the spots are brought in here and processed.

COMBS
Granger, this is Combs. Why haven't we heard from ya? Everybody else is in.

GRANGER
We had a few problems with the Law this morning. The Mayor promised the Jaycees to get tough on the rackets again, so he shut everybody down for a couple hours to make it look good. Nothing serious, it just put us a little behind for the day.

COMBS
You been making your payoffs, haven't ya?

GRANGER
Hell yes. He does this every year. There's nothing to worry about.

COMBS
Okay, finish your count and get it up here as soon as you can. I don't wanta be here all night.

GRANGER
Believe me, the Man's gonna be real happy. Looks like we cleared over ten grand this week.

COMBS
(not impressed)
We cleared 22 here.

GRANGER
Well, hell, you got the whole Chicago south side. How do ya expect the eight lousy spots I've got to compete with that?

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED

COMBS
(reading off a sheet of paper on his desk)
They did 14 grand in Evanston, 16.5 in Gary, and 20 in Cicero. Looks like you're bringing up the rear, Granger.

3-A INT. NUMBERS SPOT - DAY

Granger burns inside. One of the girls who's been sorting and counting hands him a slip of paper.

GRANGER
I just got the count. We'll put the take on the 4:15.

COMBS
We'll be waitin'.

Combs hangs up, smiling to himself, proud of the way he gave the needle to Granger.

CUT TO

4 INT. NUMBERS SPOT - DAY

Granger storming over to a safe and jerking open the door.

GRANGER
(snapping)
Mottola.

Mottola hustles out of his chair.

GRANGER
(handing him a bundle of bills)
Take this up to the city on the 4:15. They'll be waitin' for it at the clearing house. And don't stop for no drinks. You can get a cab down the street.

Mottola takes the money and slips it into his inside coat pocket with all the dramatic flair of the true flunky. No one would ever guess that he was just an overdressed messenger boy.

5 EXT. OF THE TENEMENT AGAIN

Mottola emerges from a side entrance into a narrow alley. He walks briskly down to the end and turns left into a larger alleyway; this one connecting two streets. The alley is deserted save for one scruffy, slovenly dressed young stranger coming toward him from the opposite direction. The man carries a battered suitcase and seems to be in a hurry.

Suddenly, Mottola hears shouting coming from somewhere behind him. He turns around to see a small, weathered looking thief come racing around the corner and down the alley toward him, frantically pursued by a gray-haired black man. Limping noticeably, the black man manages a few cries for help and then stumbles and falls. The stranger yells at Mottola to cover his side of the alley, and then readies himself for the arrival of the thief. Mottola just stands there, not the least interested in the exercise of justice. Just as the thief is about to run on by, the stranger throws his suitcase at the little man's legs, sending him sprawling and separating him from the wallet he's been carrying in his left hand.

The stranger makes a dash for the wallet and kicks it back to where Mottola is standing. Almost by reflex, Mottola picks it up. The thief scrambles to his feet and starts back toward his new-found enemy, brandishing a knife. Both the stranger and Mottola brace themselves for an attack. The thief, realizing that there are two people to fight, begins to think better of it. He is not a young man, nor particularly strong.

THIEF
(shaking his fist at the stranger)
You goddam nigger-lover. I'll get you for this someday, sucker egg. (X)

Mottola and the stranger exchange glances of relief as the thief flees out onto the street and disappears. The black man, meanwhile, has struggled to his feet and is staggering toward them. He collapses against the alley wall after a few steps. The stranger rushes over to him, followed somewhat absently by Mottola.

BLACK MAN
The wallet. You gotta go after him. He's got all the money.

STRANGER
Don't worry, we got the wallet. What happened? He get ya with the knife?

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED

The stranger opens the Black Man's coat to reveal a bloody wound at the top of his leg.

BLACK MAN
(trying to move)
Give it to me! Please. I gotta know it's all there!

STRANGER
You just sit tight, old man. We're gonna have to get you to a doctor.
(starting to leave)
I'll call a cop.

BLACK MAN
No, no cops!

Mottola has given him his wallet, which the black man now opens, disclosing a fat bundle of bills tied by a rubber band. Mottola and the stranger are amazed by the amount of money.

STRANGER
(a little uneasy)
You wanted by the law or somethin'?

BLACK MAN
Naw, it's okay.

STRANGER
You're crazy carryin' that kinda money in this neighborhood. No wonder you got hit.

BLACK MAN
(trying to get to his feet)
Thanks. I'm obliged to ya, but I gotta get goin'.
(his leg gives way under him)

STRANGER
You ain't goin' nowheres on that leg.

BLACK MAN
I gotta! Look, I run some slots down in West Bend for a mob here. I got a little behind on my payoffs so they figure I been holdin' out on 'em. They gave me to 4:00 to come up with the cash. I don't get it there I'm dead.

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED - 2

STRANGER
It don't look good, gramps, it's ten of now.

BLACK MAN
I got a hundred bucks for you and your friend if you deliver the money for me.

STRANGER
(hesitates)
I dunno. That little mug that got ya is mad enough at me already -- what if he's out there waitin' around a corner with some friends.

BLACK MAN
He won't know you're carryin' it. C'mon, you gotta help me out.

STRANGER
(makes up his mind)
Sorry, pal. I'll fix you up, call you a doc, but I ain't gonna walk into a bunch of knives for ya.

BLACK MAN
(desperate to Mottola)
How bout you? I'll give you the whole hundred!

STRANGER
What makes you think you can trust him? He didn't do shit.

MOTTOLA
Hey, butt out, chicken liver. I gave him back his wallet, didn't I?
(to black man)
How far is this place?

BLACK MAN
1811 Mason. Put it in Box 3C. You won't have no trouble. There's five thousand dollars there and here's a hundred for you.

MOTTOLA
(taking the bundle of bills from the black man, plus the $100 bill)
All right. I'll make your drop for you, old man. And don't worry, you can trust me.

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED - 3

Mottola puts the bills in his inside coat pocket, right next to the numbers money. The stranger, who has now finished bandaging, watches him do it.

STRANGER
If those goons out there decide to search ya, you'll never fool 'em carryin' it there. (X)

BLACK MAN
(suddenly afraid again)
What do we do?

STRANGER
You got a bag or somethin'?

BLACK MAN
No.

STRANGER
How 'bout a handkerchief?

BLACK MAN
Here.

The stranger goes into the right coat pocket and pulls out a wrinkled handkerchief.

STRANGER
Let me have the money.

Mottola takes out the Black Man's five grand and hands it to the stranger. He puts it in the handkerchief.

STRANGER
You better stick that other in here too, if you wanta keep it.

BLACK MAN
(pleading)
Just hurry, will ya. They think I been holding out on them. My wife got sick and I had to pay the bills. I wasn't holding out -- I told them I'd make it up next delivery. (X)

Mottola pulls out the numbers money and puts it in the handkerchief too. The stranger ties it all up.

STRANGER
(demonstrating by slipping the bundle down into crotch)
All right. Carry it down in your pants here.

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED - 4

STRANGER (Cont'd)
(pulling it back out and tucking it in Mottola's pants)
Ain't no hard guy in the world gonna frisk ya there.

MOTTOLA
Thanks.
(to the black man)
So long, partner. Don't worry, everything's gonna be allright.

The Black Man nods gratefully, but there's still a trace of worry on his face. Mottola trots off down the alley and out onto the street, glancing around cautiously for signs of trouble. He walks hurriedly down the sidewalk toward the cab stand in the distance. Suddenly the little man with the knife appears out of a doorway about 15 yards behind him. Mottola notices him and quickens his pace, finally breaking into a dead run.

We follow him as he dashes headlong down the street, opening a big lead on the guy with the knife. He reaches the taxi zone. He hops in a cab and slams the door.

5-A INT. TAXI - DAY

He jumps in, closes the door, and breathes a sigh of relief.

CABBIE
Where to?

MOTTOLA
Which way is Mason?

CABBIE
About 20 blocks south.

MOTTOLA
Okay, go north. The Joliet Station -- Fast.

Mottola settles back in his seat and starts to laugh.

CABBIE
What's so funny.

MOTTOLA
I just made the world's easiest five grand.

CONTINUED

5-A CONTINUED

He takes the bundle out from inside his pants in order to gaze upon his new-found fortune. He unties the handkerchief. It's full of toilet paper. Mottola looks like he's just been shot.

6 EXT. ALLEY - DAY - THE STRANGER AND BLACK MAN

hightailing it down the street, two newly solvent con artists on the lam. It's hard to run they're laughing so hard. The stranger chucks his suitcase into a trash can, and pulls into an alcove. The older black man is puffing and out of breath.

BLACK MAN
Hold on Johnny. Oh man, was that beautiful! Let's see it ---

The stranger gets out the envelope and starts tearing it open.

STRANGER
I was sure he was on to us.

BLACK MAN
Naw, you had him all the way. He just....

He stops as the stranger pulls the numbers money out of the envelope. They stare at it.

STRANGER
My God, Luther, we're millionaires.

LUTHER
Jesus, what a bundle. Did you know he was that loaded?

STRANGER
Hell no, I just cut into him. I woulda settled for pawning one of them shoes.

They look at each other in delight. Then the black man looks over his shoulder.

BLACK MAN
C'mon, we gotta get out of here! We'll split it tonight. See ya later.

The two men take off, splitting up this time.

CUT TO

7 OMITTED

8 TITLES SEQUENCE

Done to a driving Chicago blues, the sequence is designed to establish somewhat the milieu of the stranger, known to friends and enemies alike as Hooker. We see the following:

8-A EXT. PAWNSHOP - DAY - LOOKING INSIDE

Hooker is getting a radio and a garish suit out of hock. It's like seeing old friends again. All pantomime.

9 INT. HOOKER'S ROOM - DAY

A shabby little place he rents above a cigar store. We pick him up in a jerry-built outdoor shower, which he's rigged up on the fire escape. The rinse water drips down through the landing into the grimy alley below.

HOOKER
(singing)
'With plenty of money and you-oo-oo.
Oh baby, what I wouldn't do-oo-oo....'

10 OMITTED

11 ON THE STREET AGAIN - NIGHT

jauntily carrying a magnum of champagne and some flowers, obviously on his way to see someone special.

12 IN A BURLESQUE HOUSE (X)

Carrying the flowers and champagne, Hooker comes through the (X) stage door and makes his way toward the wings where he brushes by the floor manager.

MANAGER
Howdy, Hooker, you gettin' married (X)
or somethin'?

HOOKER (X)
(irritated)
Get used to it, Ed, I'm gonna look
this good from now on.

He stands in the wings and watches his date for the evening, (X) a 6'3" stripper named Crystal, do her routine.

CONTINUED

12 CONTINUED

Crystal finishes up and comes off the stage.

CRYSTAL
(tired)
Hi, Hooker, you gettin' married or somethin'?
(going past him) (X)
For God's sake Ed, did you hear that out there? Corio couldn't keep time in a watch factory. How long do I gotta put up with that?
(Ed just walks away)

HOOKER
You wanna get outa here tonight? (X)
Come into a little dough.

CRYSTAL
Can't. I got a 10 o'clock show. I need the five bucks.

12 CONTINUED

HOOKER
I'll spend fifty on ya.

Crystal looks at him a second and starts to giggle. We're pretty sure she's gonna get outa here tonight.

13 COMING INTO A POOR MAN'S GAMBLING JOINT

Little more than a converted brick basement, the place contains three shoddy, homemade roulette tables. Hooker, accompanied now by Crystal, nods a greeting to the doorman. Crystal keeps up a steady stream of conversation.

CRYSTAL
Ya know, Hooker, I think I need a new band. Hogan don't show up anymore, and Corio's such a lush he can't even keep time. You hear what he was playin' tonight?
(illustrating with appropriate moves)
I do my kick and turn and he comes in with ka chu boom boom instead of ka chu ka chu boom boom. What if some movie agent was there and I'm tryin' to dance to ka chu boom boom, huh? All those years of trainin' down the drain.

Hooker goes to a table where there are already several other people laying their bets for the next spin. Hooker knows the wheelman, an old-timer named Jimmy.

JIMMY
(glad to see him)
Hooker!

HOOKER
How ya doin', Jimmy.

JIMMY
(collecting bets and paying off the winners)
Ain't seen you in months, boy. Thought maybe you took a fall.

HOOKER
Naw, just a little hard times, that's all. It's all over now.

13 CONTINUED

JIMMY
You gonna have a go here?
(pointing to the betting board)
How 'bout a ten spot on the line here. The 4-9 been lookin' good today. Lotsa action on 28th Street down there, too. Pay ya 34-1. (X)

As Jimmy finishes his spiel, he starts the wheel spinning and drops in the ball. Betting is allowed to continue until the ball drops from the outer ring into the center.

HOOKER
(taking out his wallet)
Three grand on the black.

Jimmy is stunned. The others at the table, used to dollar bets, look at Hooker like he's some kind of foreign dignitary.

JIMMY
(worried)
You sure you wanna start off that big? Bet like that could put a real dent in us.

HOOKER
I feel lucky tonight.

JIMMY
Aw, come on, Hooker, why don't you just....

HOOKER
Three grand on the black, Jimmy.

Jimmy wants to argue some more, but the ball is getting ready to drop into the center. We see Jimmy quickly press a hidden lever under the table with his foot. The ball falls and settles into red 27 with a motion that is not quite right. The others at the table fail to notice, but Hooker is not fooled. He stares venomously at Jimmy, who knows that Hooker is on to him.

JIMMY
Sorry, Hooker.
(making an attempt at levity, in order to explain)
Good thing that ball came up red. Guy could get in trouble around here, losin' a bet that big.

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED - 2

Jimmy reaches for Hooker's money. Hooker stops him by putting his hand on it.

HOOKER
Spin it again.

Jimmy doesn't know what the hell to do. He gives Hooker a little head motion to indicate a large and menacing thug sitting in a corner watching them. Suddenly, Hooker understands why Jimmy had to cheat him, but it doesn't change his demand. (X)

HOOKER
Spin it anyway, Jimmy.

Jimmy is beside himself. If he doesn't spin again, Hooker may expose him. If he does spin, and loses, his management will fire him. He pleads to Hooker with his eyes, but it's no use. Jimmy spins the wheel and reluctantly drops in the ball. This time there is no foot on the lever, and it settles into black 15. Hooker stares at the ball a second and then looks up at his terrified friend.

HOOKER
Don't worry, pal. I knew it was my night.

Hooker pushes the money over to Jimmy and walks out of the room, nodding to the thug on the way out. He's lost $3,000, but he's still working on a lucky night. (X)

CUT TO

13-A EXT. GAMBLING JOINT - NIGHT

Hooker and Crystal out on the street. (X)

CRYSTAL (X)
(checking her watch)
Well, looks like I can still make the 10 o'clock. Thanks for the big evening, Hooker. The next time you wanna spend 50 bucks on me, mail it.

She walks off down the street.

HOOKER
(going into his pocket for more money)
Hey wait a minute.
(he comes up with 30¢)
Aw, the hell with ya.

CUT TO

14 EXT. THE WATERFRONT PROCESSING PLANT - NIGHT (X)

A late model Ford roars up and screeches to a stop in front of the plant. Out bursts a carefully-groomed, tight-lipped young man named Greer, who hustles into the plant. We follow him through a maze of machinery to the service elevator and up to the third floor where we find ourselves in the clearinghouse room we saw earlier.

15 INT. PLANT - AFTERNOON - LATE

The working day is over now, and everyone has gone, except for Combs, who sits somberly in his office.

GREER
They found Mottola. He was drunk in a dive in Joliet.. Never got on the train.

COMBS
(aggravated)
I don't wanta hear about his day, Greer. What happened to the money?

GREER
He lost it to a coupla con artists on his way outa the spot.

COMBS
How much?

GREER
Twelve thousand.

Combs sits in quiet thought for a second. Finally:

COMBS
All right. Better get on the phone to New York. See what the big mick wants to do about it.
(pause)
I gotta pretty good idea, though.

CUT TO

16 INT. - AN EXCLUSIVE NEW YORK GAMBLING CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

An agitated young man, Floyd, weaves his way through the craps and roulette tables, and hustles up a staircase to a second floor room with a drawing of a snarling tiger on the door. Below the tiger, the word "FARO" appears. There is a large man, of thuggish demeanor, guarding the door, but Floyd gives him a small hand signal and walks right by him.

CUT TO

17 INSIDE THE FARO ROOM

In the center is a beautifully-carved wooden table, on which sit a faro board and a dealing box, tended by a stone-faced Dealer, who calls the progress of the game in a continuous monotone. On his right is a bookish little man with an abacus-like device that keeps track of the cards which have already been played. On the opposite side of the table, completely absorbed in the rhythmic appearance of the cards from the dealing box, sits Doyle Lonnegan. Although his clothes and accessories are those of a wealthy man, there is a coarseness to both his movement and speech which bespeak lower class origins, for which he now has nothing but contempt.

Floyd enters the room and approaches him cautiously, trying hard to make as little noise as possible.

FLOYD
Doyle, can I see you a minute?

LONNEGAN
(not looking up from the table)
I'm busy, Floyd.

FLOYD
It's important. We had a little trouble in Chicago today. One of our runners got hit for 12 grand. A new man, Mottola. (X) (X) (X)

LONNEGAN
You sure he didn't just pocket it?

FLOYD
No, we checked his story with a tipster. He was cleaned by two grifters on 47th.

LONNEGAN
They workin' for anybody?

FLOYD
I don't know. Could be. We're runnin' that down now.

LONNEGAN
All right, mark this Mottola up a little and put him on a bus. Nothin' fancy, just enough to keep him from coming back. Get some local people to take care of the grifters. (X)
(impassively)
We gotta discourage this kinda thing.

CUT TO

18 INT. AN OLD BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Hooker, still in his suit, but looking a little worse for wear, knocks on the door of one of the apartments. A young black woman, Louise, answers the door, holding a baby.

HOOKER
(doffing his hat)
Evenin', Louise.

LOUISE
(standing back to appraise him)
Goddamn, Johnny Hooker, if you ain't a sharper in them linens. Wasn't I knew ya so good, I'd swear you had class.

Hooker laughs and walks into a big hug from an older black woman, Alva. Beyond her, in the dining alcove, we see the Black Man, (from here on referred to as Luther Coleman) playing a game of Mah-Jongg with another man whose back is to us. Elsewhere in the room, a 12-year-old boy, Leroy, sits in front of a big cabinet radio, listening to a crime-busters serial. Both the radio and the conversation between Luther and his friend can be heard in the background. Louise puts the baby to bed.

OTHER MAN
(putting down a 'bamboo' Mah-Jongg tile)
5 sticks.

COLEMAN
(not wanting it, so drawing from the pile another tile and discarding it)
North Wind.

OTHER MAN
(snapping it up)
Pung!
(discarding another tile)
3 cracks.

COLEMAN
(not being able to use that one either, drawing from the pile again and discarding it)
Green dragon.

ALVA
(embracing him in a bear hug)
Oh Johnny, Luther said you was somethin' to see today.

HOOKER
I don't know, Alva. I gotta get faster tyin' up that bundle. I'm still givin' 'em too much time to think.

ALVA
(going to the closet and getting her coat and hat)
Aw, boushwah, I played the Switch with slower hands than you got. Course the Up and Down Broadway was my best game. Me and Luther didn't make much on it, but it wasn't so touchy. Them marks used to beat ya up awful bad when they caught ya on the Switch.

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED

OTHER MAN
(drawing from pile, reacting with glee)
Another flower! Hot dog, I got all 4! And I get to draw again. How do you like that?

COLEMAN
(he doesn't like it)
Just play the game, will ya Erie.

ALVA (Cont'd)
(to the boy)
Let's go, Leroy, we'll be late for church.

LEROY
(absorbed in the radio)
Aw c'mon Ma, they're closin' in on McGurn.

ALVA
Who you rootin' for anyway?
(to herself)
Don't seem to be no help for it...No matter what we do, the boy turns out good.

Leroy goes to get his jacket. Louise is finished putting the baby to bed.

HOOKER
Since when you been goin' to church at night?

ALVA
Since they started late bingo. I'm gonna call on the Lord for a little cash while he's still payin' off. Luther, you look in on that child from time to time, will ya?

Luther nods that he will. Alva, Leroy and Louise leave for church. Hooker goes to the dining room table and plops down some money in front of the other man (known as the Erie Kid) who we recognize as the thief who stole Luther's wallet.

HOOKER
Nice goin', Erie. The guy turned out to be an oil well.

Erie and Hooker share a laugh. Luther is conspicuously silent.

HOOKER
(to Erie)
Which way did he go?

ERIE
Due north. He was gonna take it all.

HOOKER
The bastard. He can blow his nose all the way.

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED - 2

HOOKER (Cont'd)
(putting a bundle of bills down in front of Luther)
Here ya go, Luther. Six gees.

Luther doesn't even look at it.

COLEMAN
You're late. Where you been?

HOOKER
(flopping into a chair)
I had some appointments.

COLEMAN
(not fooled)
How much did ya lose?

HOOKER
(after a pause)
All of it.

COLEMAN
(pissed)
In one gaddamn night? What are ya sprayin' money around like that for? You coulda been nailed.

HOOKER
I checked the place out. There weren't no dicks in there.

COLEMAN
You're a con man, and you blew it like a pimp. I didn't teach ya to be no pimp.

HOOKER
What's eatin' you? I've blown money before.

COLEMAN
No class grifter woulda done it, that's all.

HOOKER
You think my play is bad?

COLEMAN
I think it's the best....

18 CONTINUED - 3

Hooker sinks back, embarrassed that he misread Coleman's intentions.

COLEMAN
...It's the only reason I ain't quit before now.

HOOKER
(bewildered)
What?

COLEMAN
I'm gettin' too slow for this racket. You hang on too long, you start embarrassin' yourself. (X)

HOOKER
What are you talkin' about? We just took off the biggest score we've ever had. (X)

COLEMAN
It's nothin' compared to what you could be makin' on the Big Con. You're wastin' your time workin' street marks.

HOOKER
Hey look. You think I'm gonna run out on ya or somethin'? Luther, I owe you everything. If you hadn't taught me con, I wouldn't know nothin'. (X)

COLEMAN
(a little embarrassed)
Aw hell, you sound like some goddam sucker. (X)

HOOKER
But you played the Big Con. You said it was nothin'. A game for flakes and mama's boys.

COLEMAN
(pause)
Hell, I never played no Big Con. I hung around and picked up a few (X)

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED - 4

COLEMAN (Cont'd)
things, but there ain't no rich boys gonna trust a hungry nigger enough to get conned. (X)
(pause, holding up the money)
I been lookin' for this one all my life, Johnny. Now I got a chance to step out at the top.

Hooker knows it's no use.

HOOKER
(after a long silence)
What the hell you gonna do with yourself?

COLEMAN
Aw, I got a brother down in K.C., runs a freight outlet. I can go halfsies with 'em! It ain't too exciting, but it's mostly legal.

Hooker just nods.

COLEMAN
Straighten up, kid. I wouldn't turn ya out if ya weren't ready.
(flipping Hooker a piece of paper)
There's a guy in Chicago named Henry Gondorff I want you to look up. There ain't a better insideman alive. He'll teach ya everything ya gotta know. (X)

HOOKER
You'll take a cut of what I make, won't ya?

COLEMAN
I'm out, Johnny.

HOOKER
If that's the way you want it.

COLEMAN
That's the way I want it.

CUT TO

18-A EXT. A DOWNTOWN SECTION OF JOLIET - NIGHT (X)

Mottola, dapper as ever, but roaring drunk and belligerent as hell, stumbles out of a "jump" nightclub, draped all over a young party girl. (X)

CONTINUED

18-A CONTINUED

A doorman offers to assist him to his car, but Mottola pushes him away in contempt. The girl, a little wobbly herself, has the presence of mind to signal for a cab. One pulls over immediately and she opens the rear door and helps Mottola in. Instead of getting in herself, however, she blows him a little kiss and turns back toward the club.

Mottola, not planning on going home empty-handed, reaches out to pull her back when suddenly, out of nowhere, two men wearing gray suits and black fedoras slide in next to him, one on either side. They close their respective doors quickly and signal the cabbie to pull out. Not a word is spoken, but Mottola knows he's in big trouble for the second time today.

CUT TO

19 EXT. A DIMLY LIT STREET - NIGHT

It's late at night now. Hooker and Eirie wander along the street together, not really ready to go home, but with no other ideas either. Hooker, obviously preoccupied, idly strikes a match on a street lamp as he passes and lets it burn out. He does this several times.

HOOKER
How do you like that Coleman, huh? After five years.

EIRIE
Aw come on, it was the only thing to do. He knew he was holdin' ya back.

HOOKER
We were partners. If it weren't for Luther I'd still be hustlin' pinball down at Gianelli's. I don't need anything more than I got.

EIRIE
You ain't gonna have nothin' if you don't lay off them games of chance. There's a depression on ya know.

HOOKER
There's always a depression on.

EIRIE
If you saved a little, you wouldn't have to grift so much.

CONTINUED

19 CONTINUED

HOOKER
I like griftin'.

EIRIE
You could buy yourself some things. Clothes, or a nice car....

HOOKER
I don't look any good in clothes and I don't know how to drive. What else ya got to sell, Eirie?

EIRIE
Forget it.

They walk on a few more feet, when suddenly a police car pulls up alongside them and two men jump out. The first, a uniformed policeman, grabs Eirie around the neck.

Hooker makes a break for it, but the second figure, a burly detective named Snyder, tackles him in the middle of the street, drags him back into the alley and plasters him up against a brick wall. The two have met before.

HOOKER
Hi there, Snyder. Things a little slow down at the Bunco Department tonight, eh? Somebody lose the dominoes?

SNYDER
You scored blood money today, Hooker. You need a friend.

HOOKER
(knocking Snyder's hand away)
Aw, find yourself a shoplifter to roll.

Snyder gives Hooker a swift knee in the thigh and follows it with an elbow across the head. Hooker flies into a row of boxes and garbage cans.

HOOKER
(getting up slowly)
You got the wrong guy, pal. I been home with the flu all day.
(rising to a fuller height)
You can stake out my toilet if you want.

Bang. Snyder, infuriated by Hooker's irreverance, slams him to the ground again. The policeman is no longer holding Eirie but is almost daring him to make a move. Eirie wants to go to Hooker's aid, but he knows the policeman will beat him to a pulp.

CONTINUED

19 CONTINUED - 2

SNYDER
(pulling Hooker out of the heap and smashing him against the wall again)
I'll tell ya what you did, smart boy. You tied into a loaded mark on 47th. You and Coleman played the switch for him and blew him off to a cab on 49th. If he hadn't been a numbers runner for Doyle Lonnegan, it woulda been perfect. (X)

HOOKER
(startled by the information)
You're crazy. I'm not stupid enough to play for rackets money.

SNYDER
Not intentionally maybe, but that don't make no difference to Lonnegan. He'll swat you like any fly.

HOOKER
I'll square it with the fixer.

SNYDER
Nobody can buy you a prayer, if I put the finger on ya.

Snyder lets go. Hooker sinks back against the wall. He says nothing; he's waiting for the price.

SNYDER
I figure your end of the score was at least 3 gees. I want 2 no matter what it was.

HOOKER
(lying)
My end was only one.

SNYDER
(not taking the fake)
Then you'll have to come up with another grand somewhere.

Hooker is beat and he knows it.

CONTINUED

19 CONTINUED - 3

HOOKER
All right.

He reaches into his coat, pulls out a stack of bills and counts out $2000 to Snyder. Eirie looks on in amazement; he didn't think Hooker had it.

SNYDER
(pocketing the money and motioning his partner to put his gun away)
You're a smart egg, Hooker. No use dyin' for 2 grand.

Snyder and his policeman friend get in their car and start down the street. Hooker and Eirie walk nonchalantly in the other direction.

EIRIE
I thought you blew all your money.

HOOKER
I did. That stuff I gave him was counterfeit. They'll pinch him the first place he tries to spend it.

Snyder and his partner disappear around a corner. Hooker suddenly takes off like a shot.

20 INT. DRUGSTORE - NIGHT

He runs into a drugstore and goes to the phone booth. There's already a woman in it. Hooker rips open the door and throws her out. Hurriedly, he begins to dial.

EIRIE
(standing outside the booth)
What the hell you gonna do when Snyder rushes his finger right to Lonnegan? You're committin' suicide, kid.

HOOKER
(waiting for the ring)
Aw Christ, it doesn't make no difference now. If Snyder knows

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED

HOOKER (Cont'd)
about it so does everybody else.
He never gets anything first...
Damn, there's no answer at Luther's.

EIRIE
Listen to me, Hooker. Whatever you do, don't go back to your place tonight, don't go anyplace you usually go, ya hear me? Get outa town or somethin', but....

Hooker, still getting no answer, slams the phone down and blasts out of the booth.

21 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Eirie chases him frantically, calling him to come back, but he's giving away too many years and there's no stopping Hooker at this point.

CUT TO

22 EXT. STREET - NIGHT - SHOTS OF HOOKER

pumping down the street.

22-A EXT. LUTHER'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Hooker races into Luther's brownstone, charges up to the third floor.

23 INT. LUTHER'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Hooker runs up through a small group of people on the stairs. He bursts into Luther's room, the door of which is already open. The room shows signs of a struggle, a turned-over chair, a broken lamp, but there is no Coleman. Hooker goes slowly to the window. He looks down into the courtyard and then suddenly sprints back out the door. As we hear him scrambling down the stairs, the camera dollies to the window and looks out. Over this, the sound of the baby crying. (X)

24 EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

There on the concrete below, face down, is the body of Luther Coleman. Hooker races out to it and kneels down.

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED

HOOKER
(shaking the body)
C'mon Luther, get up. You gotta get up, Luther.

In the distance, sirens are heard. Heads are out of the windows and some people are starting to gather in the courtyard.

HOOKER
Goddamn you, Luther, will you get up?
(shaking the body) (X)
I'm not waitin' for you, Luther. I'm not waitin' anymore. Get up, you son-of-a-bitch. Goddamn you, Luther, goddamn.

The sirens are close now, and Hooker tears himself away from Luther and runs. The others gather to look at the body.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

THE SET-UP

FADE OUT

FADE IN

25 INT. THE TRAIN STATION - DAY

We open on Hooker sleeping in some remote corner of the station, covered with newspapers for warmth, and barely distinguishable from the clutter of junk surrounding him. A station security officer, on his morning sweep, wanders by and delivers a terrific blow to the soles of Hooker's feet with a nightstick. Hooker jolts awake with a cry of pain, as the officer diffidently moves on toward another sleeping victim.

Tired and sore from his night in the station, Hooker struggles to his feet and attempts to take stock of the situation. He tries to smooth the wrinkles out of his suit, but it's futile. A quick check of his wallet finds it as empty as he'd remembered it.

CUT TO

26 THE STATION - GIFT SHOP - DAY

Hooker walks in and goes to the toy section. He looks through several small novelties, till he finds what he's looking for -- a little tin replica of a policeman's badge. He looks around for station detectives, and seeing none, slips the badge into his pocket.

CUT TO

27 THE STATION - WASHROOM - DAY

Hooker rinses out his mouth, towels off his face and slicks his hair back with water. It's a drop in the bucket, but it seems to revitalize him a little.

CUT TO

28 STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

We see Hooker removing a sign from a door, but the angle prohibits us from reading it.

29 INT. STATION - DAY

He drops the sign in a waste can and walks out into the crowded passenger lobby. After scanning the area carefully for a minute, he goes up to a conservative young business man, who's busy reading the schedule board.

CONTINUED

HOOKER
(flashing open his wallet to reveal the little tin badge and then closing it again quickly)
Excuse me, sir. Treasury Dept... I'd like to ask you a few questions.

MAN
(flustered)
What for? I haven't done anything.

HOOKER
We don't doubt that, but there's a counterfeiting operation passing bad money in the station. Have you made any purchases here today?

MAN
(reluctantly)
Yes, a ticket to Chicago.

HOOKER
Then I'm afraid we'll have to impound your money until we're sure that it's all good. Can I see your wallet and your ticket, please?

MAN
(handing them over)
But I got a train to make.

HOOKER
(taking out the money and returning the wallet)
It'll only take 20 minutes or so. You can pick it up at the window down the hall.

MAN
But what about all these other people?

HOOKER
(blowing up)
We'll get 'em! Give us a chance. I'm not the only agent in here, ya know. We go around advertising ourselves, how many counterfeiters do you think we'd catch, huh?
(pointing to his suit)
You think I'm wearin' this rag here 'cause I like it? Christ, everybody thinks life's a holiday or somethin' when you got a badge.

29 CONTINUED - 2

HOOKER (Cont'd)
(pouring it on)
I been here since three this morning, Charlie, and I never knew there was so much ugliness in people. You try to help 'em and they spit on you. I shoulda let ya go and gotten yourself arrested for passin' false notes.

The Businessman is totally shamed.

MAN
I'm sorry, really I am, but my train leaves in ten minutes.

HOOKER
All right, I'll give ya a break.
(pointing to a hall)
Down that hall there, there's an unmarked door on the left. Go on in there and wait at the window. I'll take this...
(he holds up the money)
...in the back and run it through right away. We'll have you outta there in a couple minutes.

MAN
Thank you. You don't know how much I appreciate this.

HOOKER
(with a little wave)
Think nothin' of it.

The man goes off down the hall, more than grateful to be given a break like this. Hooker heads for the "back." We follow the Man down the hall to the unmarked door. He strides on through to find himself face to face with a wall of busily flushing urinals.

CUT TO

[illegible]T. STATION - DAY - HOOKER

[illegible]arding the 8:10 for Chicago.

CUT TO

[illegible]T. STATION - DAY

[illegible] Man wandering up and down the hall, wondering how he could have missed that room.

32 EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY

The street runs alongside an elevated train track. We pick up Hooker coming down the street, eating a hot dog he bought with the money he just earned in the train station. (X)

He appears to be looking for an address, referring every now and then to the piece of paper Luther gave him the night before. Finally he stops in front of an old three-story building which contains a carousel on the bottom two floors and what appear to be apartments on the third floor. He peers inside the big, sliding glass doors and seeing no sign of life, goes around to the side to look for a way in.

A 35-year-old woman, Billie, appears in her bathrobe on the second floor landing and descends the stairs to get the morning paper. She's eating an apple. Although she has just gotten up and looks it, she has the presence of one who is probably quite striking at other hours. The sight of Hooker fazes her not at all. (X)

HOOKER
Excuse me, I'm looking for a guy named Henry Gondorff. You know him?

BILLIE
(starting back up the stairs)
No.

HOOKER
Luther Coleman sent me.

Billie stops and comes back down the stairs. It's the first time she's stopped chewing.

BILLIE
(checking him out)
You Hooker?

HOOKER
Yeh.

BILLIE
Why didn't you say so. I thought maybe you was a copper or somethin'.

She goes to a side door and unlocks it.

BILLIE
It's the room in the back. He wasn't expecting you so soon though.

Hooker's not quite sure what that means, but there's something about Billie that makes him know that you don't ask.

33 INT. CAROUSEL - DAY

Hooker walks past the now motionless carousel to the room in the back and knocks on the door. No answer. He gives the door a little push and it swings open.

34 INT. GONDORFF'S ROOM - DAY

The room inside is small and cluttered, consisting of a bed, a sink, and a bathroom, all covered by a layer of books, dirty clothes and beer bottles. Draped over a chair, fully dressed, but completely passed out is the one and only Henry Gondorff.

HOOKER
(to himself)
The great Henry Gondorff.

CUT TO

35 INT. A SHOWER - DAY

water blasting out of the fixture. We see Gondorff, still fully clothed, sitting in the bottom of the shower, the spray streaming off his face. An imposing figure, with deep set eyes, he just sits there stoically, looking like a soggy (X) lumberjack. Hooker, sitting on the floor between the toilet and the sink, watches listlessly. Finally ---

GONDORFF
Turn the goddamn thing off, will ya.

HOOKER
You sober?

GONDORFF
I can talk, can't I?

Hooker makes no move to get up. Gondorff struggles to his knees, turns off the water, and slumps back against the wall. The two men just look past each other a second. Down in the bottom.

GONDORFF
Glad to meet ya, kid. You're a real horse's ass.

HOOKER
Yeh, Luther said you could teach me something. I already know how to drink.

Gondorff wipes his face with his hand. His mood softens a little.

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED

GONDORFF
(quietly)
I'm sorry about Luther. He was the best street worker I ever saw.

HOOKER
He had you down as a big-timer. What happened?

GONDORFF
Aw, I conned a Senator from Florida on a stocks deal. A real lop-ear. He thought he was gonna take over General Electric. Some Chantoozie woke him up, though, and he put the feds on me.

HOOKER
You mean you blew it.

GONDORFF
(pause)
Luther didn't tell me you had a big mouth.

HOOKER
He didn't tell me you was a fuck-up, either.
(Gondorff looks at him coldly)
You played the Big Con since then.

GONDORFF
No, I lammed it around for a while while things cooled off. Philly, Denver, Baltimore, nuthin' towns.

Hooker's disappointment is obvious.

GONDORFF
But don't kid yourself, friend. I still know how.

Hooker nods, unconvinced.

GONDORFF
(getting up from the floor and emptying the water out of his pockets)
You gonna stay for breakfast, or do you already know how to eat?

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED - 2

HOOKER
(tired)
I picked something up on the way.

GONDORFF
(sensing something)
Lonnegan after you, too?

HOOKER
I don't know. Haven't seen anybody.

GONDORFF
You never do, kid.

We go to Hooker. He hadn't thought of that.

16 EXT. A BEAUTIFUL OLD COLONIAL COUNTRY CLUB - LONG ISLAND - DAY

Lonnegan, in plus fours and argyles sits on a bench as other members of his foursome tee off. Floyd comes up to him.

FLOYD
We just talked to Chicago. They got one of the grifters last night. The nigger. (X)

LONNEGAN
What about the other one?

FLOYD
They're still looking for him.

LONNEGAN
Who does Combs have on it? (X)

FLOYD
He gave it to Reilly and Cole. (X)

LONNEGAN
Hackers.

FLOYD
They staked out the other guy's place last night, but he never showed. They figure maybe he skipped town. You wanna follow 'em up?

Lonnegan regards Floyd patiently and then pats the bench beside him. Floyd sits gingerly.

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED

LONNEGAN
You see the guy in the red sweater over there?

We cut to one of Lonnegan's foursome, a short, squat little Irishman in a red sweater. He has a good-time, friendly manner and a winning Irish smile. We like him immediately.

LONNEGAN
Name's Danny McCoy. Petunias, I called him. We used to work subway entrance to the Brooklyn navy yards, sellin' flowers to the sailors. Danny'd tell 'em where to find a floosy, and I'd pedal 'em the flowers. Danny didn't know any floozies, so he usually gave 'em the address of somebody he was mad at. (X)

(chuckles to himself)
Yeh, Floyd, take a good look at that face, 'cause if he ever finds out we can be beat by one lousy grifter, I'll have to kill him and every other hood who'd like to take over my operation. You understand what I'm sayin'?

FLOYD (X)
Yes sir.

LONNEGAN (X)
Good lad.

Lonnegan is called to the tee by one of his foursome. He exchanges a friendly smile with McCoy and belts the ball down the fairway.

CUT TO

INT. THE CAROUSEL AGAIN - DAY

Gondorff, dried off now and in a new set of clothes, is pulling up the shades of the large facing windows of the carousel building. The morning light pours in, illuminating fully for the first time the ornate merry-go-round and its massive oaken horses. Hooker watches him go about his business. Billie walks down from the mezzanine which surrounds the carousel.

BILLIE
You feeling all right this morning, Henry?

GONDORFF
Fine, Billie.

CONTINUED

37 CONTINUED

BILLIE
You mind opening the round a little early today? We got some business coming in before hours.

Gondorff waves okay.

GONDORFF
(to Hooker)
Great little countess, that Billie. Runs a good house up there, too. One of the few left the syndicate doesn't own.

Gondorff walks around on the carousel, checking straps, bearings and poles. Hooker follows him.

HOOKER
(getting impatient)
Gondorff, am I gonna learn some Big Con around here or not?

GONDORFF
(on his back, checking underneath one of the horses)
You didn't act much like you wanted to.

HOOKER
I wanna play for Lonnegan.

GONDORFF
(getting up)
You know anything about him?

HOOKER
(exploding)
Yeh, he croaked Luther. What else do I gotta know?

GONDORFF
Plenty. Does he bet on the fights? Is he a ladies' man? A boozer? Does he play the market? Who does his dirty work? Do you know anything?

HOOKER
He runs the numbers on the South side.

CONTINUED

37 CONTINUED - 2

GONDORFF
And a packing company, a chain of Savings & Loans and half the politicians in Chicago and New York. There ain't a fix in the world gonna cool him out if he blows on ya.

HOOKER
I'll take him anyway.

GONDORFF
Why?

HOOKER
'Cause I don't know enough about killin' to kill him.

It's the right answer. Gondorff didn't know it himself until now.

GONDORFF
You can't do it alone, ya know. It takes a mob a guys like you and enough money to make 'em look good.

HOOKER
So I know plenty a guys.

GONDORFF
This isn't like playin' winos on the street. You gotta do more than outrun the guy.

HOOKER
(incensed)
I never played for no winos.

GONDORFF
(going right on, ignoring Hooker's remark)
You gotta keep his con, even after you spent his money. And no matter how much you take from him, he'll get more.

HOOKER
You're scared of 'em, aren't ya?

GONDORFF
Right down to my socks, pal. We're talkin' about a guy who'd kill a grifter over a chunk a money that wouldn't support him two days.

37 CONTINUED - 3

HOOKER
(giving up)
Then you don't wanta do it.

GONDORFF
I just don't want you comin' back to me halfway through and sayin' it's not enough. 'Cause it's all you got.

Gondorff goes over to start the machinery.

HOOKER
Can you get a mob together?

GONDORFF
I don't know, this one's kinda risky. I doubt if I can get more than two or three hundred guys.

Gondorff switches on the carousel and steps back to admire his handiwork. The carousel makes a grinding sound, does a few lurches, and stops cold.

CUT TO

Music begins and we are into a short:

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

detailing the arrival of the other three members of Gondorff's "mob." Throughout, Gondorff wears the fedora hat which is his trademark. We begin with ---

A tall, good-looking man, Kid Twist, making his way through the railway station. Impeccably dressed and carrying a small suitcase, he combs the terrain carefully with his eyes. Finally he catches a glimpse of the thing he's been looking for. It's Gondorff, standing by a newsstand. Gondorff makes a quick snubbing motion on his nose as if flicking off a gnat. This is known among con men as the "office." Twist returns the sign with a barely discernible smile as he walks on by. Con men rarely acknowledge each other openly in public, but it's obvious that these two are glad to see each other.

CUT TO

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Hooker in, having his hair cut and his nails manicured. Gondorff gives instructions to the barber.

CUT TO

40 INT. HABERDASHERY - DAY

Hooker is modeling a new suit in front of a mirror. He doesn't look too pleased, but Gondorff peels out a bankroll anyway.

CUT TO

41 EXT. HOTEL - DAY

a pair of white spats stepping off a bus. We follow them into a:

42 INT. HOTEL LOBBY

where we tilt up to reveal J. J. Singleton, the most flamboyant of the bunch. On his way to the check-in desk, he silently exchanges the "office" with Gondorff, who is sitting on a lounge reading the paper.

CUT TO

43 INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Hooker being shown into a small apartment room by an old woman. It consists of a bed, a table and a sink. Hooker nods his acceptance to the woman and gives her a bill. He takes another look around the room and decides to go out somewhere, but first he wedges a small piece of paper between the door and the jamb, about an inch off the floor.

CUT TO

44 INT. A BIG METROPOLITAN BANK - DAY

We hold on a slight, bespectacled teller, Eddie Niles, in the process of counting a large deposit. Niles is all business; if he's ever smiled, no one knows about it. He glances up for a second and sees Gondorff "officing" him from across the bank. Without a word he shoves the money he's been counting back into the hands of a startled customer, abruptly closes up his window, flips his identification tag on the manager's desk and walks out of the bank.

CUT TO

45 INT. AN UPSTAIRS ROOM OF THE CAROUSEL BUILDING - NIGHT

This room has obviously been relegated to the status of the storage room. It contains the water heater, mops and brooms, old bed springs, etc. In the middle of the room a space has been cleared for a table, around which are seated Hooker, Gondorff, Niles, Singleton and Twist. Gondorff is in his T-shirt, but still wears his hat. Kid Twist is in a suit as usual. The room is illuminated by a single bare bulb hanging from the ceiling.

CONTINUED

45 CONTINUED

NILES
(referring to notes as he reports)
Lonnegan gets most of his income from the numbers, even though he's been puttin' more and more money into his Savings & Loan business.

GONDORFF
You think he's movin' outa the rackets?

NILES
No. He owns most of the stock, and it's traded on the board, but my guess is he's just trying to build himself a respectable image. He came out of the Five Points district, but he's been telling everybody he was born in Forest Hills. He knows the market though. I don't think we can take him on a stocks deal.

GONDORFF
All right, Twist, what do ya got on the numbers?

TWIST
The tipsters say it's run out of a packing house on 14th by a guy named Combs. Lonnegan comes out every three weeks or so to check on it, but stays away from the day-to-day stuff, in case it's raided.
(turning to Hooker and producing two photographs)
These are two of Comb's favorite torpedoes. Riley and Cole. You ever seen 'em?

We recognize Riley and Cole as the two guys who got into Mottola's car.

HOOKER
(studying the photographs)
No.

TWIST
They were the guys who hit Luther. They also got the numbers runner you conned. He was found in a quarry with a knife in his eye.

CONTINUED

45 CONTINUED - 2

Hooker's head comes up from the photographs. (X)

TWIST (X)
(collecting his papers)
Lonnegan's had seven or eight people rubbed on his way up. His pattern's been to get close to a racket boss, learn his operation and then move in on it. He's done it to Gorman, O'Donnell, Buchalman, and he took the numbers for Sharkey. All four a these guys are dead. He's vindictive as hell, Henry, and he kills for pride. It doesn't add up that he'd let Hooker get away from him.

GONDORFF (X)
(to Hooker)
You see anything, you let us know, huh? If they got you on the spot, we'll fold up the con. You'd be too easy to find. You got that?

Hooker nods, but we know he hasn't really got that.

HOOKER
You sure it'll be one of these two?

TWIST
No. They're just the only ones we know of.

Billie has finished gathering the mugs, and leaves the room with them. We follow her down the hall and into the:

46 RECEIVING ROOM OF HER BROTHEL

Carousel music filters up from the arcade below. The room has a bar along one wall and the rest of the space is taken up by tables and couches. It's a comfortable place, but not opulent. Some of the girls sit patiently on the couches, others play canasta at the tables. Most of the men are at the bar, fortifying themselves for the task at hand. Billie comes over to the bar.

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED

BILLIE
(to the bartender)
Set me up five more beers, will ya Danny.

As Danny goes to fill the mugs, Billie's eyes fix on a man at the end of the bar. We move to reveal Snyder, intently scanning the room, as if he'd lost a dancing partner in the crush. Not finding what he wants, he comes down the bar to Billie.

SNYDER
You the owner here?

BILLIE
That's right.

SNYDER
(flipping out his badge)
Lieutenant Snyder. Bunco.

BILLIE
Joliet badge, Snyder. Don't cut much up here.

SNYDER
(trying to ignore her remark)
I'm lookin' for a guy on the lam from a counterfeiting rap. Thought he mighta come in here.

BILLIE
Don't think so. I know everybody in the place and I always bounce the lamsters.

SNYDER
All right if I look around your lobby?

BILLIE
No, but you're welcome to a free beer before you go.

Billie grabs a bottle of beer, pours some in a shot glass and pushes it over to Snyder. He ignores the gesture.

SNYDER
(with controlled force)
I don't really need your permission.

We go to Billie. She knew that when he came in.

CUT TO

47 THE STORAGE ROOM AGAIN

The discussion continues. Hooker, a bit out of his depth here, listens and stays silent.

SINGLETON
I don't know what to do with this guy, Henry. He doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke, he doesn't chase dames, he's a Commander in the Knights of Columbus, and he only goes out to play Faro. Sometimes plays fifteen or twenty hours at a time. Just him against the house.

GONDORFF
Any roulette or craps?

SINGLETON
Won't touch 'em. The croupier at Gilman's says he never plays anything he can't win.

GONDORFF
What about sports?

SINGLETON
He likes to be seen with fighters sometimes, but he doesn't go to the fights or bet on 'em.

GONDORFF
Jesus. Does he do anything where he's not alone?

SINGLETON
Just poker, and he cheats at that. Pretty good at it, too.

A little spark of electricity goes around the table. Here's something they can work with.

GONDORFF
Where does he play?

SINGLETON
The porters say he runs a braced game on the Century Limited when he comes out here from New York. One hundred dollar minimum, straight poker. Lotta high rollers ride that train just to play him.

GONDORFF
Sounds good, J.J. He's slowing down already.

CUT TO

THE RECEIVING ROOM AGAIN

Snyder has completed his inspection of the "lobby" and found nothing. Danny, meanwhile, has set up the five beers on a tray.

48 CONTINUED

SNYDER
Which way are the rooms?

BILLIE
Who told ya this guy was in here?

SNYDER
Nobody. I just know what kinda women he likes. I'm gonna check all the joyhouses till I find him.

BILLIE
Maybe I could help ya if ya told me his name.

SNYDER
I think I'll keep that to myself. Which way are the rooms?

BILLIE
Right through there. But I wouldn't go in there if I were you.
(picks up the tray)

SNYDER
(snidely)
What are ya gonna do, call the cops?

BILLIE
I don't have to. You'll be bustin' in on the Chief of Police just up the hall.
(she exits with the drinks)

Snyder is stopped cold. He calls after her.

SNYDER
Keep your nose clean, lady. He can't spend all his time here.

CUT TO

49 THE STORAGE ROOM AGAIN

Billie comes over to Gondorff and whispers in his ear, while the others talk. His eyes flick momentarily to Hooker.

SINGLETON
I think we ought to play him on the Rag. It's the tightest game we got, and it's not all over the papers yet.

CONTINUED

49 CONTINUED

TWIST
Lonnegan's a fast egg, J.J. He's not gonna sit still for a standard play.

NILES
So what does that leave us? We can't con the Rag to a banker.

Gondorff has nodded to Billie and rejoins the conversation. She serves the others beer.

GONDORFF
We'll use the Wire. Never known a poker player who wouldn't like to beat the ponies.

NILES
The Wire is ten years outa date.

GONDORFF
That's why he won't know it.

SINGLETON
I'm not sure I know it.

GONDORFF
Well, it's gonna take two of us workin' the inside. Any objections to Hooker as second man?

We go around the table. There are none.

GONDORFF
All right, we'll give Lonnegan the hook on the train and play him here. You think I can get in that poker game, Eddie?

NILES
All you gotta do is show up with some money and look like a fool.

GONDORFF
I also gotta win.

He looks at Hooker. There is a challenge in their look. Gondorff smiles broadly, then casually, to them all.

GONDORFF
By the way, any of you guys been passing off green goods lately?

We go around the table. No reply.

CONTINUED

49 CONTINUED - 2

GONDORFF
Billie, if that Dick comes in again, stall him till I can get a look at him. And let me pay ya for these beers.

BILLIE
What are you talking about? It's on the house.

GONDORFF
(pulling out a $5 bill)
Naw, I want ya to have this.

He hitches up Billie's skirt, and puts the bill in her garter.

GONDORFF
Don't look at it till ya go to bed though or it'll turn to paper.

Billie smiles and leaves the room.

50 INT. HALLWAY

She walks halfway down the hall and stops. She can't wait. Lifting up her skirt, she finds that the five has indeed turned to paper. As she breaks into laughter and continues on down the hall, we:

FADE OUT

51 OMITTED

FADE IN

T H E H O O K

FADE OUT

FADE IN

52 EXT. A SUNKEN ALLEY - DAY

Actually little more than a service area between two apartment buildings. Niles, Kid Twist, and a middle-aged black man, named Benny Garfield, enter the alley with an old man and follow him down a stairwell to a subterranean basement. A faded sign above the door says Stenner's Billiards. We follow them inside to a:

52-A INT. A LARGE BARREN ROOM - DAY

An office comes off it at one end. Judging from the fluorescent lights overhead and the scattered cue racks which still hang tenuously on the walls, the place, indeed, used to be a pool hall. Niles and Garfield go all the way to the back, while Twist stays near the front with the old man.

NILES
Looks all right. It's big enough and off the street.

GARFIELD
I don't know. This is kinda short notice. I'm not sure we can get it all done by Saturday.

NILES
Got to. Gondorff's ridin' the mark in from New York on the Century.

Garfield thinks it over a little. He's taking another look at the place. We go to Twist and the old man by the door.

TWIST
We'll take it.
(pointing through the door)
You manage the building at the end of the alley?

OLD MAN
(with pride)
For fifteen years.

TWIST
I'll need a room over there that faces this way. How much a week?

OLD MAN
Only rents by the month. Two hundred and fifty for the two of them.

CONTINUED

52-A CONTINUED

TWIST
(pulling out his wallet)
This is the last time I expect to see you down here.

OLD MAN
(watching the bills being counted into his hand)
Never heard of the place.

We go back to Niles and Garfield.

GARFIELD
Been a while since I stocked a wire store. Not many mobs playing that anymore.

NILES
All we need is the bookie setup for now. We'll worry about the telegraph office later.

GARFIELD
All right, I'll rent ya everything I got in the warehouse for two grand. That'll give ya phones, cages, blackboards and ticker gear. You supply the guys to move 'em. If you want a counter and bar, that's another grand. I don't know where the hell I'm gonna get 'em though.

NILES
C'mon, you can do better than that. We ain't no heel grifters.

GARFIELD
You want the stuff tomorrow or don't ya? It's gonna take hours just to clean it up.
(pause)
Besides, Gondorff's still a hot item. Where am I gonna be if he gets hit?

NILES
Just give us what ya can, Benny. We'll send a truck down.

Twist has rejoined them by now.

CONTINUED

52-A CONTINUED - 2

TWIST
(to Garfield)
You wanna work flat rate or percentage?

GARFIELD
Who's the mark?

TWIST
Doyle Lonnegan.

GARFIELD
Flat rate.

CUT TO

53 INT. A NEW YORK TRAIN STATION - DAY

We pick up Doyle Lonnegan, accompanied by two bodyguards and Floyd, making his way through the station. He stops at a cigar counter to buy some cigarettes, and we reveal Gondorff and Hooker sitting on their suitcases on the other side of the room.

GONDORFF
(eyes fixed on Lonnegan)
Guy in the blue pinstripe and grey fedora.

Hooker looks and finally spots him in the crowd. We go back to Lonnegan, as he moves off from the cigar counter, toward his train. Hooker watches him with the intensity of one gazing on a religious object.

HOOKER
He's not as tough as he'd like to think.

GONDORFF
(picking up his suitcase)
Neither are we.

CUT TO

54 EXT. TRAIN

Lonnegan and his retainers getting on the train. Two cars down the line, we see Hooker and Gondorff boarding also. On his way in, Gondorff takes the conductor aside.

CONTINUED

54 CONTINUED

GONDORFF
I hear there's a friendly poker game on this train tonight. You know anything about that?

CONDUCTOR
A little.

GONDORFF
You think you could get me in that game?

CONDUCTOR
I don't know. There's usually a waiting list.

Gondorff flashes a $50 bill.

CONDUCTOR
(loosening up a bit)
That'll get you first alternate, sir.

Gondorff pulls out another fifty.

CONDUCTOR
(taking the money)
I'll see what I can do.

CUT TO

5 INT. A BASEMENT BAR - EARLY EVENING

Kid Twist enters and threads his way through the maze of tables to a door at the back of the building. A large bull of a man is stationed there, obviously to discourage those who don't have credentials to enter. Twist is not such a man.

TWIST
(going right on through)
How ya doin', Lacey.

LACEY
(innocently pleased for one so menacing)
Good to see ya again, Twist.

6 INT. ANOTHER ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Inside is another room, this one much better lit than the outer one. There are only three tables in here, around which are seated the elite of the Con World. Twist is enthusiastically

CONTINUED

56 CONTINUED

greeted by Duke Boudreau, a large, rotund man whose stylish dress and authoritative manner mark him as a powerful figure in this group.

BOUDREAU
Twist! When did you get back in town?

TWIST
Coupla days ago. You heard about Coleman, didn't ya.

BOUDREAU
Yeh, some of the boys passed the hat for Alva and the kids. I've never seen 'em so worked up. They don't like bein' gunned.

TWIST
Don't worry, we're gonna send a little callin' card of our own. Gondorff's settin' up a Wire Store on the north side. I need a twenty man boost right away.

BOUDREAU
I got plenty a talent in here tonight. Take your pick.

TWIST
This is a tough one, Dukey. These guys have gotta be the quill.

BOUDREAU
(to one of his assistants)
Get me the sheet, Jake. Let's see who's in town.

CUT TO

57 THE OUTER PART OF THE BAR AGAIN

A silhouetted figure appears in the entrance doorway. The word "chill" races from table to table and the place falls still. The bartender pushes a button behind the bar and a buzzer goes off in the back room. Boudreau gets up from his table and opens a small viewing port in the door.

The silhouetted figure is now walking slowly past the silent tables. It's Snyder and he's checking out every face in the place.

BOUDREAU
Twist, you know this guy?

CONTINUED

57 CONTINUED

TWIST
(taking a look through the viewing port)
No. Never saw him before. He's a dick, though.

Snyder walks all the way to the back, and then retraces his route. About halfway back, he stops at one of the tables, recognizing a grifter he knows. It's the Eirie Kid.

EIRIE
Hello, Snyder. What are you doin' up here?

SNYDER
I'm on vacation. You seen your friend lately?

EIRIE
Yeh, he packed it in and enrolled in detective school.

Snyder, in no mood for jokes, grabs Eirie by the hair and slams his face into the table. Eirie just stays there; he knows it doesn't pay to assault a detective. Twist is watching all this intently from the viewing port.

SNYDER
You see him, you tell him he better pay up before I get him. (X)

Eirie raises his head slowly, but says nothing. There is a slight trickle of blood from his nose. Snyder turns and walks slowly out of the bar. When he is a safe distance down the street, the chatter and drinking resume.

CUT TO

1# THE INSIDE ROOM AGAIN

Twist gives an all clear signal and returns to the table where he and Boudreau were talking. Boudreau reads from a list of names. Twist listens with a certain preoccupation. He's still thinking about the little confrontation he just witnessed.

BOUDREAU
Horse Face Lee, Slim Miller, Suitcase Murphy, and the Big Alabama are in from New Orleans. Crying Jonesy and the Boone Kid from Denver, and Gloomy Gus and Limehouse (X)

CONTINUED

58 CONTINUED

BOUDREAU (Cont'd)
Chappie from New York. Those and the guys outside should give ya 30 or so to choose from.

TWIST
Good, have 'em down at Stenner's old Pool Hall before 3:00. We're gonna run through the route tonight.

BOUDREAU
Okay, Twist, but you know if this blows up, I can't do ya no good downtown. Gondorff is Federal.

TWIST
Don't worry about it, pal.

CUT TO

59 EXT. SPEEDING PASSENGER TRAIN - NIGHT

ripping through an open stretch between New York and Chicago.

CUT TO

59-A INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Singleton is walking down a passageway and stops at a door and goes in.

60 INT. GONDORFF'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Gondorff is rapidly shuffling cards to four empty places. He is alone. He looks up as Singleton enters.

SINGLETON
You in?

GONDORFF
Yeh, I think so. I gave the kay-ducer a C-note. You find out the deck?

SINGLETON
He usually plays with a Royal or a Cadenza.
(handing him two sealed decks)
I got you one of each. He likes to cold deck low, 8's or 9's.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

GONDORFF
Nice work, J.J.

Singleton slips out as Gondorff unpeels the packs.

61 INT. THE TRAIN - NIGHT

We pick up Lonnegan coming out of his compartment, flanked by only one bodyguard and Floyd. They start walking single file (X) through the passenger section toward the compartment where the poker game will be held. Suddenly a drunken woman comes staggering around the corner and bumps into him.

They grapple a moment and Lonnegan pushes her away in disgust.

WOMAN
(sloppy drunk)
Keep your mitts off me, ya big lug. If I'da wanted you handlin' me I woulda asked ya.

Lonnegan ignores her and proceeds down the passageway. As the woman proceeds in the other direction between passengers, we see it is Billie. She drops something on a seat beside a passenger. A hand reaches to pick it up. It is Lonnegan's wallet and it is Hooker who picks it up.

Hooker waits a moment, then stands and goes in the direction Lonnegan has taken. He passes by the open door to the card room, hesitating only slightly to hear the greetings exchanged inside before the door is shut. Then he continues on into the next car. He turns into Gondorff's compartment.

CUT TO

62 INT. GONDORFF'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Gondorff is still practicing. He looks up as Hooker enters and tosses him the wallet.

HOOKER
She got him clean. He hasn't missed it.

Gondorff nods, takes the money out, counts it.

GONDORFF
Twenty-five grand. Looks like he's expecting a big night. (X)

CONTINUED

62 CONTINUED

He takes out his own wallet and puts the money in it, and tosses the empty wallet back to Hooker, and resumes his shuffling and dealing. Hooker sits back silently and watches him.

HOOKER
He's waitin' for you in the card room.

GONDORFF
Let him wait.

As he deals, on the second pass he attempts to cut from the bottom, muffs it completely and sprays half the deck on the table. Hooker regards him steadily as he gathers them back up. Gondorff finally meets his gaze.

GONDORFF
You just worry about your end, kid.

HOOKER
If we ever get to it.

CUT TO

63 INT. THE POKER ROOM - NIGHT

A specially outfitted compartment with a table and chairs in the middle and leather cushions around the outside for kibitzers. Lonnegan and 3 other players are already there and seated. They're getting slightly impatient.

LONNEGAN (X)
(to the conductor)
You sure you checked this guy out?

CONDUCTOR (X)
(nods)
He seemed pleasant enough and had a lotta money on him. And quite free with it, I might add. Two hundred dollar suit, expensive baggage. I'll vouch for him.

CUT TO (X)

64 GONDORFF'S CABIN AGAIN

Gondorff is standing in front of the mirror dressing. He grabs up a clean white shirt and rumples it up in his hands. He then picks up a half-full bottle of gin. Hooker gives him a disapproving look. Gondorff smiles and pats some on his face.

GONDORFF
Always drink gin with a mark, kid.
They can't tell when you cut it.

He pours part of the bottle down the sink and starts filling it with water.

CUT TO

65 THE POKER ROOM AGAIN

Everybody's itchy now.

LONNEGAN
All right, let's start without him.
Mr. Clemens, give me the cards.

The Conductor hands him a sealed deck. As he begins to open it, Gondorff comes into the room, coatless, rumpled, unshaven and looking slightly tipsy. The others at the table, all men of high social or financial standing, are somewhat put off.

GONDORFF
Sorry I'm late boys. I was takin' a crap.

This bit of grossness does little to improve his image.

GONDORFF (X)
(sticking out his hand to no one in particular)
Shaw's the name. Any 'a you boys wanna make a little book in Chicago, I'm the guy to see.

There are no takers for either the handshake or the book-making offer. (X)

CONDUCTOR (X)
(stepping in to save the situation)
Mr. Shaw is a bookmaker from Chicago. Mr. Shaw, meet Mr. Clayton from Pittsburgh, Mr. Jameson, Chicago, Mr. Lonnegan, New York, and Mr. Lombard, Philadelphia.

GONDORFF (X)
Glad to meecha.
(taking an empty chair)
Guess this is my seat, huh?

CONDUCTOR (X)
Straight poker. 100 dollar minimum, table stakes. Since this is a gentleman's game, we assume you're all good for your debts. How much would you like, Mr. Shaw?

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED

GONDORFF (X)
Five thousand to start with.

The Conductor makes a note of the figure on a pad, and begins (X)
to assemble the proper number of chips.

LONNEGAN
(shuffling the cards)
Mr. Shaw, we usually require a tie at this table. If you don't have one, we can get ya one.

GONDORFF
Yeh, that'd be real nice of ya, Mr. Lonneman.

LONNEGAN
(coldly) (X)
Lonnegan.

He begins to deal. (X)

CUT TO

66 EXT. THE SUNKEN ALLEY - NIGHT

A truck is now parked at the end of the alley, and several workmen are busy unloading it. One group carries a large blackboard; others have boxes of glasses, ash tray stands, furniture, etc. Take several cuts.

CUT TO

67 INSIDE THE ONCE-VACANT POOL HALL

Now a blaze of activity. We take several cuts of workmen papering the walls, tacking down carpet, putting in new light fixtures, painting signs, all under the supervision of Niles. From now on, we will refer to the pool hall as the store.

Back in the office, Kid Twist is "interviewing" one by one, a group of con men lined up outside the office door. A gray-haired old buzzard, Curly Jackson, approaches the table which is serving Twist as a desk. Curly is practically in rags and has several days growth on his face. He wears a little beret which he takes off to address Twist.

CURLY
Name's Curly Jackson. I worked for Gad Bryan outa Baltimore.

TWIST
You ever played the Wire, Curly?

CONTINUED

67 CONTINUED

CURLY
Used to rope for it long ago. I can shill, mark board, anything you want. I don't run with riffraff and I only drink on weekends.
(affecting an English accent)
Me specialty is an Englishman.

Twist is taken with the man, despite his appearance.

TWIST
All right, Curly, you're in. We got a rack of suits over there. Get yourself a nice tweed one.

CURLY
(exiting)
That's all right. I got all my own stuff.

CUT TO

68 THE CARD GAME AGAIN

Gondorff and Lonnegan have most of the chips. Lonnegan is slightly ahead. Gondorff has made a token attempt to wear the provided tie, having tied it in a knot around his neck, but not having bothered to put it under his collar. He has a shot glass and the bottle next to him, from which he has been (X) drinking heavily. He and Lonnegan are the only ones left in this hand.

LONNEGAN
(throwing chips in)
Raise 500.

GONDORFF
(likewise)
See ya and raise three.

LONNEGAN
(more chips)
See and raise five.

GONDORFF
Five and call.

Lonnegan lays down his hand, a solid two pair. Gondorff turns out three tens. Lonnegan is beat.

CONTINUED

68 CONTINUED

GONDORFF
Tough luck, Lonnihan, but that's what you get for playin' with your head up your ass. Couple more like that and we can all go to bed early, huh boys.

Gondorff reaches for his gin bottle, but Lonnegan's hand is already there, on it. (X)

LONNEGAN (X)
(like ice)
The name is Lonnegan. Doyle Lonnegan. You're gonna remember that, or you're gonna find yourself another game.

Gondorff hesitates, then withdraws his hand from the bottle. He knows he's pushing it. Lonnegan takes the bottle from him and hands it to Floyd, who drops it in a wastecan. (X)

CUT TO (X)

69 INT. THE STORE - NIGHT

The work is still progressing. We see two workmen installing a ticker tape machine in a secluded area of the store.

GARFIELD
We bought ya a tap into Moe Anenberg's wire. He's got eyes at every track in the country. You'll get race results, odds, scratches, pole positions, everything; and just as fast as Western Union gets 'em.

NILES
Does J.J. know how to use this thing?

GARFIELD
All he's gotta do is read.

We go to Kid Twist, still conducting interviews in the office. A young, rather sullen man, Buck Duff, steps to the table.

DUFF
Buck Duff. I was in Maxwell's boost in Troy.

TWIST
You the Duff that didn't come up with his end when Little Jeff was sent up?

CONTINUED

69 CONTINUED

DUFF
Wasn't no problem a mine.

TWIST
He was a con man, wasn't he?

DUFF
He was a tear-off rat. He got what he deserved. No sense helpin' pay his bills.

TWIST
(like ice)
Shove off, Duff.

Duff stands there a second and then slouches away from the table. He stops however, by the door. The next man up is the Eirie Kid. Twist knows he's seen him somewhere before.

EIRIE
(nervous as hell)
Name's Joe Eirie.

Twist waits for more, but it's not coming.

TWIST
You played for any particular mobs?

EIRIE
No.

TWIST
You know the Wire at all?

EIRIE
No...I never played no Big Con before. But Luther Coleman was a friend a mine. I thought maybe there was something I could do.

TWIST
(pointing to Eirie's slightly swollen nose)
You get that nose in Duke Boudreau's tonight?

Eirie nods a reluctant "yes."

TWIST
You got moxie, Eirie. Get yourself a suit.

Eirie is so happy, he can barely blurt out a thank you. Buck Duff, enraged that Twist would hire a total amateur, turns in disgust and strides vengefully out of the store.

CUT TO

70 THE CARD GAME AGAIN

The room is dense with smoke now, and the players are feeling the heat. Gondorff has his white shirt open, revealing a stained T-shirt underneath. The bottle next to him is almost empty. He sneezes and wipes his nose with the tie Lonnegan gave him. The chips are now about equally divided between Gondorff and Lonnegan. The others are losing badly.

GONDORFF
Raise 300.

LONNEGAN
Pass.

JAMESON
(throwing in his last few chips)
Raise 200.

GONDORFF
Two and call.

Jameson lays down two pair. Gondorff has a flush. Gondorff rakes in the chips, which now put him ahead of Lonnegan.

JAMESON
Well I'm out.

GONDORFF
Don't worry about it pal. They wouldn't a let you in here if you weren't a chump. Lombard over there'll join ya in a couple minutes.

JAMESON
Now see here....

LOMBARD
I've had enough of this game, and more than enough of the company.
(getting up to leave)
Cash me in, Mr. Clemens.

GONDORFF
(indicating Lonnegan and Clayton)
Looks like it's just us three, huh?

LONNEGAN
(eyes drilled into Gondorff)
Yeh, just us three.

CONTINUED

70 CONTINUED

LONNEGAN (Cont'd)
(calmly getting to his feet)
Why don't we take a five minute break, Mr. Clayton. Tempers are running a little high.

GONDORFF
Aw c'mon, Linnegran. I was just startin' to do good. (X)

Lonnegan, who is already halfway out the door, ignores it. Floyd follows him out.

CUT TO

70-A INT. SMOKING ROOM

We pick up Lonnegan coming down the passageway to enter the smoking room. The smile has vanished.

LONNEGAN
Stack me a cooler, Floyd.

FLOYD
(trying to settle him down)
C'mon, Doyle, we'll be in the station in a half hour. So you split with him. You still make a nice hunk on the other guys.

LONNEGAN
(an order)
Load me a deck. Set it up for threes and nines. I'll cut it in on his deal.

FLOYD
(taking a deck and beginning to sort it)
What do ya want Clayton to get?

LONNEGAN
Nothin'. He's gotta be outa there early. I'm gonna bust that bookie bastard in one play.

CUT TO

71 INT. THE POKER ROOM AGAIN - NIGHT

A pair of hands shuffling. We pull back to reveal that they're Gondorff's. He passes the deck to Lonnegan to cut. (X) Lonnegan takes the deck and in one lightning motion substitutes a new deck, while making it look like he's cutting the old one. The conductor has finished collecting from Jameson and Lombard, who remain. Gondorff picks up the deck and begins to deal. As the hand is picked up, we see that Gondorff has four threes, Lonnegan four nines, and everybody else has nothing.

CLAYTON
(opening the bidding)
Fold.

LONNEGAN
250.

GONDORFF
Raise 1,000.

LONNEGAN
Raise 500.

Gondorff looks at Lonnegan very carefully for a second. Lonnegan meets his stare.

GONDORFF
(slowly)
Raise 2,000.

The spectators shift a little. It's the biggest bet of the night.

LONNEGAN
See and raise 1,000.

GONDORFF
(taking it to him)
Raise 5,000.

Lonnegan fingers his remaining chips. He knows he's won, but he wants to bleed it for every bit of suspense.

LONNEGAN
(going for broke)
See, and raise the rest.

Lonnegan pushes in the rest of his chips. Gondorff, who is only required to match Lonnegan's total, throws in all his too. It's a showdown.

CONTINUED

71 CONTINUED

GONDORFF
Call.

Lonnegan puts down his four nines. Gondorff just stares at them a second, lets out a deep sigh and lays down four jacks. Lonnegan is aghast. This just can't be. He glances at Floyd, who can do nothing but sit there with his mouth open.

GONDORFF
(raking in the chips)
Well that's all for me tonight, boys.
I'm gonna leave ya some cab fare.

The others players look at each other in disgust. Gondorff (X)
starts collecting from the bank. Lonnegan sits in a state of lethal indecision.

GONDORFF
(to Lonnegan)
You owe me 15 grand, pal.

Lonnegan, with a stare that could kill, finally reaches for (X)
his wallet. Suddenly the stare goes soft. He tries a few more pockets. No soap. Gondorff finishes collecting from the others.

LONNEGAN
(getting up to get it)
I guess I left it in my room.

GONDORFF
(blowing up)
What! Don't give me that crap you little weenie. How do I know you ain't gonna take a powder.
(waving his wallet, which is full of Lonnegan's money)
You come to a game like this, you bring your money.

Lonnegan, having had all he can take, goes for Gondorff, but is restrained by the conductor.

GONDORFF
All right, buddy, I'm gonna send a (X)
boy by your room in five minutes, and you better have that money or it's gonna be all over Chicago that your name ain't worth a dime, and you won't be able to get in a game of jacks in this town.

Gondorff stalks out of the room. We pick him up coming down the passageway to his compartment.

71-A INT. GONDORFF'S COMPARTMENT 71-A

The drunkenness has vanished. We follow him into his cabin, where Hooker is waiting anxiously.

HOOKER
How'd ya do?

GONDORFF
(modestly)
Well we got some workin' money anyway.

Gondorff tosses his winnings on the table. He smiles, but for the first time his hands are shaking.

GONDORFF
Okay, kid, you're on. But I gotta tell ya, it's a hard act to follow.

CUT TO

72 INT. LONNEGAN'S CABIN - NIGHT 72

Lonnegan sits in a chair smoking, eyeing Floyd coldly. Floyd paces in front of him.

FLOYD
Doyle, I know I give him four threes! He had to switch decks. We can't let him get away with that.

LONNEGAN
What was I supposed to do? Call him for cheating better than me in front of the others?

There's a knock at the door. Floyd goes and opens it. It's Hooker.

HOOKER
My name's foley. Mr. Shaw sent me.

Floyd motions him in without a word.

LONNEGAN
Your boss is quite a card player, Foley. How does he do it?

HOOKER
(matter-of-factly)
He cheats.

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED

Lonnegan looks Hooker over a second. He doesn't like smart asses.

LONNEGAN
Then I'll just keep my money and we'll have another game.

HOOKER
You don't have any to keep.
(pulling out Lonnegan's wallet and tossing it on the table)
He hired a dame to take it from ya.

Lonnegan just stares at the wallet. Then he looks up at Hooker.

HOOKER
Shaw's been planning to beat your game for months. He was just waiting for you to cheat him so he could clip ya.

Lonnegan leaps at Hooker in a blind rage, drives a sledge hammer blow into his stomach. Then grabs him by the throat.

LONNEGAN
Who do you think you're talkin' to, errand boy. Nobody sets me up.
(letting go of Hooker who slips to the floor, turns to Floyd)
Take him back to the baggage room and put one in his ear. We'll get his friend later and dump 'em both, the first tunnel we hit.

FLOYD
Aw, for Christ sake, there were four witnesses at that table....

LONNEGAN
(viciously)
You wanna get dumped too?

FLOYD
Doyle, we're gonna be in the station in a minute!

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED - 2

HOOKER
(on the floor, barely able to speak)
It's not gonna look too good, killin' a guy you owe money to. There's better ways to take him down.

LONNEGAN
Shut up. Nothin's gonna save your ass.

HOOKER
Shaw'd kill me too, if he knew I was tellin' ya this.

LONNEGAN
(a long pause)
Okay, why the rat?

HOOKER
I'm gonna take over his operation, Lonnegan.
(pause)
I need you to help me break him.

Lonnegan is stopped for a second. He looks at Hooker long and hard, as if the intensity of his gaze could separate truth from fiction. Finally he reaches for the wallet and opens it. It's empty.

LONNEGAN
Where's the money?

HOOKER
Shaw has it. I couldn't very well take it back from him.

There is a silence -- broken suddenly by the noise of the train braking into the station.

LONNEGAN
C'mon, I'm giving you a lift home.

Hooker hesitates.

HOOKER
I gotta go with Shaw.

LONNEGAN
You'll explain it somehow.

HOOKER
But he's expecting....

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED - 3

LONNEGAN
I'm giving you a lift.

HOOKER
Sure thing.

LONNEGAN
Let's go then.

CUT TO

73 INT. LONNEGAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Driving through the city, the driver and Floyd in front, Hooker and Lonnegan in back. We begin with a twelve block silence, while Lonnegan thinks. Hooker glances out the window from time to time, just to make sure they're really going to his place.

LONNEGAN
What makes you think you can beat him?

HOOKER
I been plannin' this for two years. I know his organization backwards and forwards. But I need somebody respectable...and not completely legit. What I'm gonna do isn't very legal.

LONNEGAN
(insulted)
I'm a banker, friend. That's legit in this state.

HOOKER
All you gotta do is put down a bet for me at Shaw's place. I'll supply all the money and the information.

LONNEGAN
What about the money you came to collect. Isn't he gonna miss it?

HOOKER
I'll tell him you paid it. I keep all his books. He trusts me.
(pause)
If ya help me out, I'll pay ya back the twenty-five grand he stole outa my own pocket.

CONTINUED

73 CONTINUED

LONNEGAN
It's worth that much to ya?

HOOKER
Maybe a couple million.

We go to Lonnegan. That last phrase has registered. He looks at Hooker with a glint of amused recognition in his eye.

LONNEGAN
Where you from, Foley?

HOOKER
I was born in Five Points on the east side, but I moved out fast.

LONNEGAN
(chuckling)
Out and up, eh? Hey, Floyd, I'm gonna have to keep this guy away from you. You're liable to get ideas and throw me out on my can.

Lonnegan breaks into deep bellows of laughter. Floyd is totally humiliated. He glares at Hooker with contempt. Hooker flashes him a little smile.

74 EXT. HOOKER'S PLACE

The car pulls up in front of Hooker's place. Lonnegan is still laughing.

HOOKER
(getting out)
Klein's Drug Store, 660 Marshall at 12:30, if you're interested.

LONNEGAN
If I'm not there by quarter of, I'm not coming.

Hooker nods and walks up the street to his apartment building. Lonnegan's car speeds away from the curb and his renewed laughter dies in the distance. Hooker breathes a sigh of relief. He's passed his first test -- or has he? We follow him up the stairs to his room.

75 INT. HOOKER'S APARTMENT

He's just about to unlock the door, when he notices the little piece of paper he left in the door is on the floor.

CONTINUED

75 CONTINUED

Without the slightest hesitation, Hooker leaps over the bannister and races back down the stairs. Two gunmen, Riley and Cole, burst out of his room and fire at him over the railing, but he's already too far down. Riley and Cole give chase.

CUT TO

76 THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING

Riley and Cole barrel out of the building and onto the sidewalk. There is an empty bus stopped at a light, but they find no sign of Hooker. As the light changes, we cut to the other side of the bus, where we see Hooker crouched on the rear wheel housing, hanging on to a vent. He's a little shaken, but most of all, he's still alive. We hold on him, as the bus moves off.

GONDORFF (v.o.)
Everything go all right?

HOOKER (v.o.)
(lying)
Yeh, it was easy.

CUT TO

77 INT. THE STORE - NIGHT

Hooker and Gondorff are sitting alone in the back office while the work goes on outside. Their conversation continues.

CONTINUED

77 CONTINUED

GONDORFF
No signs of trouble?

HOOKER
What doya mean?

GONDORFF
You know, somebody tailin' ya. A torpedo or somethin'.

HOOKER
(wanting to get off the subject)
No, not a thing.

Gondorff has his doubts, but lets them ride.

CUT TO

78 OTHER PARTS OF THE STORE

We concentrate on some of the fine details, i.e. Garfield explaining how the ticker will read out to Singleton and Billie; Curly Jackson showing a younger con man how to mark the odds board properly.

GONDORFF (v.o.)
How 'bout Lonnegan?

HOOKER (v.o.)
I gave him the breakdown just like ya told me to.

GONDORFF (v.o.)
And?

HOOKER (v.o.)
He threatened to kill me.

GONDORFF (v.o.)
Hell, they don't do that and you know you're not gettin' through to 'em.

79 CONTINUING: BUT WITH CAMERA CHANGE

We concentrate on Niles, who's making up the "boodles" or fake bankrolls. He puts a real $100 bill on the bottom, then two inches of

HOOKER (v.o.)
Then he drove me home. He tried to put himself away as legit, so I went right into the pitch.

CONTINUED

79 CONTINUED

cut green paper on top, and then another $100 bill on top of that, so that it looks like he has a whole stack of $100 bills. The bundle is then bound with a sealed label, like those used in banks, that says $10,000. We see that he has already made several of these bundles.

GONDORFF (v.o.)
Did he hold you up on anything?

HOOKER (v.o.)
Naw, he just sat there and listened. I don't know if he bought it or not.

CUT TO

80 INT. STORE

Twist in the middle of the room giving a route to the Eirie kid. He shows him where to get his drink at the bar, where to sit and finally how to leap up and throw his racing form down in disgust.

GONDORFF (v.o.)
That's all right. Once they start listening, they're in trouble. Just don't give him more than he asks for. If you rattle his imagination a little, he'll come up with all the right answers himself. But all he's gotta do is catch you in one lie and you're dead.

CUT TO

81 HOOKER AND GONDORFF IN THE STORE OFFICE AGAIN

They both look tired.

HOOKER
You think he'll show?

GONDORFF
Did he say he wouldn't?

HOOKER
No.

GONDORFF
(softly)
He'll show.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

T H E T A L E

FADE OUT

FADE IN

82 WE OPEN ON A WIDE SHOT OF THE ALLEY OUTSIDE THE STORE

At first it appears to be deserted, but we move to reveal a figure in an upper window of the apartment building which forms one side of the alley. It's Kid Twist. His eyes roam the street, for what, we do not yet know.

CUT TO

83 INT. AN OLD DRUGSTORE ACROSS FROM THE ALLEY - DAY

Probably prosperous at one time, it has since declined, its large fountain and eating area now host to two bums and Hooker, who sits alone in a rear booth near the telephone. Dressed in a tuxedo, he nurses a cup of coffee, and anxiously alternates his glances between the clock and the empty street outside. It's 12:52.

CUT TO

84 INT. THE STORE - DAY

The place is full of people, although we avoid long shot so as not to give away the room as a whole yet. Instead, we concentrate on the tense, waiting faces of some of the more familiar people:

Gondorff and Niles in tuxedos behind a barred cashier's area. Gondorff mutilates a piece of gum in his mouth. Niles just stares out into space cracking his knuckles.

GONDORFF
Eddie, cut that out, will ya.

The boardmarker walking nervously back and forth in front of his odds board, checking every letter and number. He stops to cross a T on one of the horses' names. It was already crossed, but he does it again anyway.

Billie and Singleton, in an area hidden from the rest of the room, watching the print-out on the ticker machine. The clicking of the ticker is the only sound we hear in the store.

Curly Jackson in front of a mirror, pasting a fake Van Dyke on his chin to go with his tweed suit and monocle.

A couple of Billie's girls adjusting their waitress outfits and primping their hair. Each has a tray full of drinks beside her.

The Eirie Kid silently retracing his "route" to make sure he has it down.

CONTINUED

84 CONTINUED

Despite the crowd, there is no talking and little movement, save for the constant swirling of smoke from several cigars and cigarettes. The group is like a theatre company waiting to go on opening night.

CUT TO

85 THE DRUGSTORE AGAIN

It's 12:56 and Hooker is worried. He looks up to see two large men, obviously racket goons, come in the front door, and take a seat facing him in the next booth. They stare at him impassively, waving the waitress away when she comes to take their order. Hooker knows they're Lonnegan's men, but is somewhat unsettled by the fact that Lonnegan is not with them. Suddenly, a voice.

VOICE
Carver?

Hooker turns around to find that Lonnegan is seated in the booth directly behind him. His bodyguard is in the one behind that.

LONNEGAN
You should always look to the back too, kid.

HOOKER
(sliding out of his booth and into Lonnegan's)
I was afraid you weren't gonna come. We haven't got much time.

LONNEGAN
(curtly)
Get on with it then.

HOOKER
(pointing to telephone)
Sometime after 1:00 a guy's gonna call here and give you the name of a horse.
(pulling out a wad of bills)
All you do is take this two grand across the street to Shaw's place and bet it on that pony. There's nothin' to it, but don't take too much time. We only have 3 or 4 minutes after you get the call.

CONTINUED

85 CONTINUED

LONNEGAN
You're not gonna break him with a $2,000 bet.

HOOKER
This is just a test. The big one comes later. Be careful with that though, it's all I got.

LONNEGAN
And you were gonna pay me back?

HOOKER
I am after this race.

Lonnegan says nothing. He's not sure he likes a man who's stupid enough to bet his last dollar on a horse race.

HOOKER
I gotta get back before Shaw misses me. Good luck.

86 EXT. STREET

Hooker hustles out across the street and into the alley.

87 INT. DRUGSTORE

Lonnegan watches him through the window and then settles back in his seat to wait for the phone.

87-A OUTSIDE STORE

As Hooker descends the stairwell into the store, he gives Kid Twist the office. Twist turns away from the window and looks at his watch. 12:58.

CUT TO

87-B DRUGSTORE

Lonnegan waiting by the phone, idly pinging a knife on the salt shaker. It's 1:40. A man enters the store and walks over to use the phone.

LONNEGAN
We're waitin' for a call.

The man looks at Lonnegan a second, and then at his four goons. He decides maybe he'll make the call later.

CUT TO

88 INT. STORE

Kid Twist again. Billie enters the room with a piece of paper. Kid Twist looks at it a second and then picks up the phone and begins to dial.

89 INT. DRUGSTORE

Lonnegan again. He's getting impatient now and lights a cigarette, and then the phone rings. He answers it quickly and we hear:

TWIST
Bluenote at 6 to 1 on the nose.

The receiver clicks down at the other end. Lonnegan hangs up and goes out the door, followed by his entourage.

90 EXT. STREET

We follow him across the street and into the alley, where he signals one of the bodyguards to check the place out. Kid Twist pushes a button on his window sill, and a buzzer goes off inside the store. The previously inert figures there spring to life.

Lonnegan's bodyguard descends the stairwell and knocks at the door, where he is greeted by Hooker in the capacity of host. He looks the place over and motions an okay to Lonnegan.

91 INT. STORE

As Lonnegan enters, we see the room for the first time in its entirety. Overnight it has been transformed into a swank private club, with bar, cigarette girls, upholstered furniture and chandeliers.

SINGLETON
Look at that. He's got four apes with him.

GONDORFF
That'w what I like about these guys, J.J...They always got protection against things we'd never do to 'em.

Everywhere there is activity. A bank of telephones buzzes incessantly. Sheet writers scurry from phone to phone, taking bets of tremendous size from prominent people.

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED

SHEET WRITER
Yes, Mr. Ruth, 20,000 on Dancing Cloud.

We reveal that the phones are controlled by a master switch, which one of the recruited con men operates from behind a partition.

The boardmarker, wearing headphones suspended from a sliding wire, hurriedly chalks up races and odds on a huge blackboard. From the loudspeakers we hear the words "Last flash". The odds on Bluenote settle down to 8 to 1.

Lonnegan makes his way through the throng toward the betting line. His bodyguards fan out to various positions in the room. The betting crowd itself (known as the "boost") consists of close to twenty people, none of whom, of course are what they're pretending to be.

Large amounts of money are changing hands at the betting window. Boodles are in sight everywhere.

Lonnegan slips into the betting line, feeling somewhat estranged from the general merriment around him. There are two men in line ahead of him. The first, Curly Jackson, slaps down several bundles of cash in front of Niles, who's the cashier, and places a $20,000 bet on War Eagle. Gondorff appears at the cashier's window and catches sight of Lonnegan.

GONDORFF
Never get enough, huh pal? I'd think you'd get tired of losin', Honnigan.

LONNEGAN
(piercingly)
The name is Lonnegan.

GONDORFF
(to Niles)
Make sure you see cash from this guy, Eddie. He's got the name for bettin' money he don't have.

The man in front of Lonnegan puts $5,000 on Dancing Cloud. He makes the bet on credit. Lonnegan steps to the window.

LONNEGAN
Two-thousand on Bluenote.

NILES
(writing out a ticket)
Is that all?

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED - 2

LONNEGAN
(pissed)
That's all.

Bluenote's race is now up on the board. The race caller comes on the loudspeaker.

CALLER
Ladies and Gentlemen. This is Arnold Rowe, your caller for the second race at Belmont in New York. A mile and 1/8. Four year olds and up. And they're off!

We see that the caller is Singleton, and that he's calling the race from a concealed booth next to the cashier's cage.

CALLER
Around the first turn it's War Eagle first by a length, Jail Bate second by one and a half, Dancing Cloud third by a half on the outside, followed by Lucky Lady, Mojo, Wits' End and Bluenote.

Lonnegan goes to the bar, orders a drink, and settles down at one of the tables. It happens to be the one the Eirie Kid is at. Gondorff and Niles watch it from the cashier's cage.

GONDORFF
(worried)
That's not where we want him to sit.

Eirie tries to ignore Lonnegan at first, but realizes he better make some conversation.

EIRIE
C'mon War Eagle.
(to Lonnegan)
That Dancing Cloud's a hell of a finisher. War Eagle's gonna have to open up a little more on 'em.

LONNEGAN
You know anything about a horse named Bluenote?

EIRIE
Naw, he's never done much. Probably in here just to round out the field. War Eagle's where you wanna have your money.

Eirie excuses himself and heads for the bar.

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED - 3

CALLER
Into the clubhouse turn, it's War Eagle by two lengths, Dancing Cloud has moved up to second by a half, Lucky Lady is third by three followed by Jail Bate, Mojo, Bluenote and Wits' End.

The heretofore chaotic energy of the parlor is now focused on the race. Several of the patrons begin to yell for their horses. Lonnegan remains seated. He seems bored with it all. Hooker comes over to clear some empty glasses from his table.

LONNEGAN
(out of the corner of his mouth)
You really picked a winner, kid.

HOOKER
Give 'em a little time.

CALLER
Into the backstretch it's War Eagle still by a length, Dancing Cloud closing on the inside, is second by two, Lucky Lady is third by one and a half, followed by Bluenote, Jail Bate, Wits' End and Mojo.

Lonnegan perks up just a little. Bluenote, at least, has moved up. The rest of the people in the place are really rooting now. Few of them remain seated.

Hooker arrives at the bar, with the glasses he cleared from Lonnegan's table. Eirie is already there, fortifying himself with a scotch.

HOOKER
You're doin' great, Eirie. He loves ya.

Eirie nods, somewhat unconvinced, and heads back to the table.

CALLER
Into the far turn, it's Dancing Cloud now by half a length, War Eagle is second by two, Bluenote is third by a half and moving fast on the outside. Lucky Lady is fourth by four lengths, followed by Jail Bate, Wits' End and Mojo.

Lonnegan is getting more intent now.

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED - 4

CALLER
Coming down the stretch, it's Dancing Cloud by one length, War Eagle and Bluenote are neck and neck by two. Now it's Dancing Cloud, Bluenote and War Eagle.
(shouting now)
Dancing Cloud and Bluenote head to head....

The place is going crazy. Even Singleton is standing up to get the necessary excitement in his voice.

CALLER
Dancing Cloud, Bluenote. Dancing Cloud, Bluenote. It's Bluenote by a nose. Dancing Cloud is second by two, War Eagle third by three and a half. Time for a mile and 1/8, 2:01 and 6/10 seconds.

Most of the patrons collapse into their chairs like spent lovers. Eirie slams his racing form to the floor. Nobody had Bluenote.

CURLY
(tearing up his ticket)
Bloody awful. Who in blazes is Bluenote?

LONNEGAN
(to Eirie, very self-satisfied)
War Eagle's where you want to have your money, huh?

Eirie doesn't reply. He can't believe Bluenote won. Lonnegan looks to Hooker. Hooker gives him a wink. For the first time, Lonnegan permits a smile.

CUT TO

91-A LONNEGAN AT THE CASHIER'S WINDOW

Niles is counting out $16,000 to him (all of which Gondorff won the night before). Gondorff looks somewhat perturbed. Lonnegan picks up the money and tauntingly waves it at him.

GONDORFF
(getting his name <u>right</u> this time)
Don't bother to come back with a piker's bet like that again, Lonnegan. We got a $5,000 minimum here.

CONTINUED

91-A CONTINUED

GONDORFF (Cont'd)
(to Hooker)
Show this bum out.

Hooker hesitates a second.

GONDORFF
Go on, ya goddamn ninny.

Gondorff gives Hooker a hard shove in the back with his foot, sending him into a table and sprawling to the floor.

GONDORFF
(indicating Lonnegan's bodyguards)
And tell him not to bring his garbage men in here no more. This is a class joint.

Hooker, pretending to be humiliated, gets to his feet and escorts Lonnegan to the door. Lonnegan stops, gives Gondorff a derisive smile, and walks out. Once he's gone, the general clatter and hubbub in the room cease, like it had been turned off by a faucet. Most of the boost sit down and relax. Curly Jackson rips off his Van Dyke. It's been itching him.

GONDORFF
He's gaffed, kid. He should start coming to you now.

CUT TO

92 INT. COMB'S OFFICE AT THE CLEARINGHOUSE - DAY

Combs sits passively on the edge of his desk glancing across the room every now and then at Riley, who is slumped uneasily in a folding chair, looking like a defendant at the Inquisition. Both remain silent, like two men in a waiting room. Suddenly, what they've been waiting for arrives. Lonnegan comes into the office, flanked by his bodyguards. Skipping the usual pleasantries, he walks right over to Riley.

LONNEGAN
All right, Riley. What the hell happened?

RILEY
(not looking at him)
We missed him.

LONNEGAN
You weren't hired to miss him.

CONTINUED

92 CONTINUED

RILEY
There wasn't any way he coulda known we was in there. We made a clean pick on the lock and didn't leave no footprints in the hall. Somebody musta wised him up.

LONNEGAN
Yeh, and what does Cole say about that?

RILEY
I don't know. He took it hard.

LONNEGAN
All right, get outa here. You're outta work.

Riley gets up and drags himself out the door like a whipped dog.

LONNEGAN
We'll put Salino on it. I need somebody careful.

COMBS
Salino? Why waste our best people on a small-time job like this? It ain't no heavy gee we're after. The guy's a five and dime grifter.

LONNEGAN
Then why isn't he dead? (X)

COMBS
They didn't think he'd be so cagey, that's all. They'll get him next time.

LONNEGAN
Use Salino. It'll take a little longer, but there won't be any holes in it.

Combs gives up. The second time's the charm.

LONNEGAN
And tell Cole I wanta see him when he gets in.

COMBS
He's not comin' in. Not to get bounced off a job anyway.

CONTINUED

92 CONTINUED - 2

LONNEGAN
He had his chance and all he did was shoot up a rooming house. Made a lotta noise and woke up a few cops, but didn't hit nothin'.

Combs keeps his mouth shut. There's no way to talk to Lonnegan when he's like this.

LONNEGAN
(cooling a little)
This is Salino's job now, Vince. If Cole wants to muscle in on it, that's his business. But he's breakin' the rules and Salino's not gonna like it.

CUT TO

93 INT. LONNEGAN'S HOTEL - DAY

The finest the period had to offer. We pick up Hooker coming through the lobby. As he starts up the stairs we:

CUT TO

Floyd in Lonnegan's hotel room. He hangs up a phone he's been talking on.

FLOYD
(to Lonnegan)
He's on his way.

Hooker knocks at the door and is admitted by a bodyguard. Lonnegan, wearing a silk bathrobe, is seated at a table counting a pile of money. There are two other assistants behind him. They don't look friendly.

HOOKER
Well, what did I tell ya?

LONNEGAN
You got lucky once. That's not enough.

HOOKER
Lucky, hell. I could do it every day.

LONNEGAN
Why don't ya then?

CONTINUED

93 CONTINUED

HOOKER
'Cause it's better to do it all at once.
(leaning close)
We're puttin' down 400 grand next week. At five to one we make two million. Twenty percent of that is yours if ya stick with us.

LONNEGAN
You got a system, Foley?

HOOKER
No. You can still lose with a system.

LONNEGAN
You're past-posting, aren't ya?

HOOKER
Could be.

LONNEGAN
How?

HOOKER
(pause)
You gonna stay in?

LONNEGAN
Not until I get some answers.

HOOKER
(outflanked)
We got a partner downtown runs the central office of the Western Union. Race results from all over the country come in there and go right across his desk on their way to the bookies. All he does is hold them up a couple minutes until he can call us and get a bet down on the winner. Then he releases the results to the bookies and we clean up on a race that's already been run. It can't miss, unless the Western Union Dicks get onto it.

Lonnegan sits back a second, then comes forward again and pushes a pile of bills over to Hooker. Hooker smiles and begins to count the money.

CONTINUED

93 CONTINUED - 2

LONNEGAN
You got the 400 grand yet?

HOOKER
Not yet, but...
(stopping suddenly)
Hey, there's only a grand here.

LONNEGAN
We're gonna place another bet tomorrow.

HOOKER
(getting angry)
What is this? That's my money.

LONNEGAN
You owe me twenty-five grand.
Besides, if your setup's as good
as you say, you'll get even more.

Hooker's in a jam and he knows it.

HOOKER
(after a pause)
I gotta talk to my partner first.
We can't afford to expose our game
too much.

LONNEGAN
Good. I'll talk to him too.

HOOKER
No.

LONNEGAN
(paternally, but
still a threat)
You been waitin' a long time for
this, Foley. Don't ruin it for
yourself.
(after a pause)
We'll pick you up tomorrow at three.

Hooker says nothing for a minute. Floyd comes over and presents him with his hat and opens the door. Hooker walks out.

94 EXT. LONNEGAN'S HOTEL - DAY (X)

We pick up Hooker coming out of the hotel and going off down the street. As he does so, we pull back all the way across the street and through the interior of a parked car to reveal the silhouette of a man seated at the wheel. We move to his right hand, which rests on the steering column. It's covered by a black glove and the middle finger is missing. His trigger finger, however, taps lightly on the wheel.

CUT TO

95 INT. AN INDOOR TELEPHONE BOOTH - DAY (X)

one of the old, wooden kind -- accordion doors with glass panes in the upper half. Hooker dials rapidly. (X)

HOOKER
Twist? I told him the tale, but he didn't go for it. He wants to see my partner tomorrow at 3:00.

TWIST
Hell, we'll never get a telegraph store setup by then. Any chance of talking him out of it?

HOOKER
None. I woulda stalled him, but I didn't have many friends in the room.

TWIST
All right, we'll have to play him on the fly. I'll get Eddie lookin' for a place.

HOOKER
Let me know when ya get somethin'.

TWIST
Sure thing, Tootsie.

Hooker blows a mock kiss through the phone and hangs up. He turns to leave the booth, when suddenly he sees something that stops him cold. There looking through the glass is the smirking face of Detective Snyder. Hooker is immobilized.

Snyder puts his hand inside his coat and slowly draws out his gun. He points it right at Hooker's face and then violently smashes all the glass in the upper half of the door with the barrel. Fragments of glass spray into the booth, a couple of which imbed themselves in Hooker's cheek.

Hooker quickly whips open the door, trapping Snyder's hand in the accordion and jarring loose his gun. Hooker sprints out of the booth as Snyder scrambles for his pistol and gives pursuit.

96 EXT. ALLEYS AND SIDE STREETS - DAY - THE TWO MEN

We follow the two men up alleys and side streets as they race through the dregs of the city, two panting shadows moving through places that only get light at night. The wind blows drops of blood off Hooker's cheek as he runs. Snyder still has his gun, but would rather inflict pain than death.

97 CONDEMNED BUILDING

Hooker makes for a condemned building and scrambles up the stairs, steps giving way under him as he goes.

97-A INT. BUILDING

On the fourth floor, he ducks into a room and quickly locks the door.

We pan the room to reveal that the whole back side of the building is gone. Hooker runs toward the ledge and leaps through the air, landing on the fire escape of an adjacent building, some 15 feet away. He kicks in a window and goes off down the hall. We cut back to:

Snyder furiously kicking in the locked door. He finally crashes through, only to find an empty room and a beautiful panorama of the city and its nearest Hooverville.

CUT TO

98 LONG SHOT - HOOKER

winding his way through the slum area of town, dashing along back streets, over fences and through vacant lots, making good his escape. From our angle, he looks like a rat in a maze.

GONDORFF (v.o.)
Why didn't you tell me about Snyder before?

HOOKER (v.o.)
I thought I'd lost him.

CUT TO

99 INT. GONDORFF'S ROOM AT THE CAROUSEL BUILDING - DAY

Hooker sits sullenly at the table. Billie stands over him putting some ointment on his face to close the cuts. Gondorff looks on. Their discussion continues.

GONDORFF
Well you found him again and we're gonna have to do somethin' about it. What else haven't ya been tellin' me?

HOOKER
Nothin'. I told ya everything there is.

CONTINUED

99 CONTINUED

GONDORFF
Then why'd ya move outa your room?

HOOKER
It was too noisy.

GONDORFF
You can't play your friends like marks, Hooker.

Hooker doesn't reply. He knows Gondorff's on to him.

GONDORFF
You know how easy it'd be for one of Lonnegan's guys to nail you?

HOOKER
All we need is a couple days, Henry. A couple days and we'll get Lonnegan down and stomp on 'em.

GONDORFF
You just won't learn, will ya. Hell, you come in here, I teach you stuff maybe five guys in this world know, stuff most grifters couldn't do even if they knew it, and all you wanna do is run down a bullet.
(pause)
You're just like all them new jerks. Lotsa nerve and no brains. And ten years from now when me and the others are through and you dumb guys are all dead there won't be one gee left who knows the Big Con was anything more than a way to make a livin'.

HOOKER
A couple days; that's all I'm askin'. I can stay clear that long.

GONDORFF
(trying to be angry and failing)
Christ, they'll probably miss you and hit me.

FADE OUT

1a #02062

FADE IN

T H E W I R E

FADE OUT

FADE IN

100 INT. A SLEEZY DINER - LATE AFTERNOON

Located across the street from Hooker's apartment building. Hooker sits alone in a booth, with a plate of ham and eggs he's hardly touched.

The two cuts on his face have pretty much stopped bleeding. A big fan above the counter area drones away lethargically, it's air stream insufficient to either cool the place or drive out the smell of onions and grease.

A waitress, Loretta, emerges from the kitchen and ambles slowly over to Hooker's table. Slim and raven-haired, she manifests an indifference bred from years spent delivering things to people who are rarely grateful for what she brings. Only a light scar on her left cheek hints at another side.

LORETTA
You done?

HOOKER
Yeh, I guess I shoulda had the meat loaf.

LORETTA
(deadpan)
It isn't any better.

HOOKER
Where's June today?

LORETTA
(figuring up the bill)
She don't work here no more. I'm fillin' in for a couple days... till I can get a train outa here.

HOOKER
Where you goin'?

LORETTA
(putting the check down and walking away)
I don't know. Depends what train I get on.

Hooker looks for some sign that she's putting him on. He doesn't get it. He takes out some money, drops it on the table and walks out.

CUT TO

101 EXT. A WESTERN UNION OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

A truck with the words CLAYTON BROS., CUSTOM PAINTING AND DECORATING stenciled on the side, is parked out front. Two men, wearing overalls and painter's caps, walk into the office carrying paint buckets, brushes and tarpaulins. When they get to the reception counter, we see that they are Twist and Singleton.

TWIST
(to the receptionist)
Excuse me. We're here to paint Mr. Harmon's office.

RECEPTIONIST
(obviously not expecting them)
Mr. Harmon's office? Hold on just a second.

She goes to get Mr. Harmon.

CUT TO

102 EXT. THE SLEEZY DINER - LATE AFTERNOON

Hooker is standing on the curb outside the diner, obviously waiting for somebody. Lonnegan's car pulls up and Hooker hops in the back.

LONNEGAN
What happened to your face? (X)

HOOKER
Had a little fight with a raggle (X)
down on 13th. She got me with her ring.

LONNEGAN
Oughta lay off the skirts. You (X)
won't find any of my boys moonin' around that kinda trash.

Hooker looks at Floyd, who stares doggedly ahead. (X)

CUT TO

103 INT. THE WESTERN UNION OFFICE AGAIN - LATE AFTERNOON

Mr. Harmon is looking over the authorization papers that Twist and Singleton have given him. He can't find anything wrong with it.

CONTINUED

103 CONTINUED

HARMON
Brigham signed it all right. I can't understand why he didn't tell me.

SINGLETON
Ah, he's like all them supervisors. They think they're too good for regular people. He says he was in here a while ago and the place was a mess.

CONTINUED

103 CONTINUED

Harmon looks around, hoping it's not true.

TWIST
We'll try and hurry so we don't keep you out of your office too long.

HARMON
Why can't I work with you in there?

SINGLETON
Look pal, we gotta cover the floor, the furniture, everything, so we don't spill on nothing. Now if you wanta sit in there with a tarp over your head, you're welcome to it.

HARMON
All right, how long will you be?

TWIST
Hour or two at the most. We do good work.

Harmon is resigned. Twist and Singleton pick up their gear and march into the office. Once inside, we notice that the office has an exit door which opens to an outside alley. Twist immediately removes his overalls, revealing the suit and tie he's wearing underneath. He takes out a picture of himself, a woman and three small children, and puts it on Harmon's desk, replacing a smiliar picture of Harmon's family. Singleton, meanwhile, has spread a few tarps and begins to paint the walls.

CUT TO

104 EXT. THE WESTERN UNION OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Lonnegan's car pulls up and stops across the street.

HOOKER
We'll go to the side door.

We follow Hooker and Lonnegan across the street to the side entrance which opens into:

INT. HARMON'S OFFICE

Hooker knocks and Twist, of course, answers.

HOOKER
Les, I got Mr. Lonnegan with me. He wants to see you a second.

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED

TWIST
(irritated)
What the hell's the matter with you. We coulda met at a club or somethin'.

HOOKER
I thought it might be good for him to see the setup.

TWIST
(hushed)
Well we can't talk in here. They're having the place painted.

Twist walks over to the intercom on his desk. He leaves the door open so that Lonnegan can get a good look at the office, Twist's picture in it, the painter, etc...Lonnegan's not missing any of it.

TWIST
(talking into the intercom)
Miss Barnes, I'm going home a little early today. Tell anyone that calls that they can reach me here in the morning. Thank you.

CUT TO

106 INT. FRONT OFFICE

Harmon's secretary at the other end of the intercom. Mr. Harmon is with her. They look at each other a second and Harmon decides he better see what's happening in his office. He opens the door to find it empty except for a pile of painting equipment and one haphazardly painted wall.

CUT TO

107 INT. A HOTEL BAR - EVENING (X)

Hooker, Lonnegan and Twist sit at one of the more secluded tables. They are not eating. (X)

TWIST
Can't do it. There're telegraph inspectors all over the place. (X)

LONNEGAN
I want to see it one more time. (X)

CONTINUED

107 CONTINUED

TWIST
I got 400 grand comin' in from the coast next week. I'm not gonna blow it for a measly 14 Gees. No sir, I say when we place our bets.

LONNEGAN
Not if you want me to keep makin' 'em for ya.

Twist hesitates.

LONNEGAN
If it works again tomorrow, I'm gonna finance the whole thing. Half a million dollars worth. We split 60-40.

TWIST
What doya mean? We already got a guy. He's liquidating everything he has for this. And still givin' us half.

LONNEGAN
With 20 per cent off the top for me. Either way you only get 40.

TWIST
What am I supposed to say to him?

LONNEGAN
Tell him to drop dead. With what I know about your operation you should be worryin' about keepin' me happy.

TWIST
(almost pleading now)
But we can't keep goin' into Shaw's place and cleanin' up on longshots. He's bound to get wise.

LONNEGAN
(getting up to leave)
Then we'll go for short odds this time. You'll just have to give me all three places instead. See ya tomorrow.

CONTINUED

107 CONTINUED - 2

TWIST
(feebly)
Yeh, see ya tomorrow.

On his way out, Lonnegan gives Hooker a little nod, as if to say "That's the way ya gotta handle 'em." Twist and Hooker delay a few seconds and then get up to leave.

We frame the shot with a coffee cup large in the foreground. As they go to the door, a black-gloved hand with four fingers enters the frame and puts a nickel down next to the cup.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

T H E S H U T - O U T

FADE OUT

FADE IN

108 INT. A DOWNTOWN DINETTE - MORNING

Snyder finishes a donut and a cup of coffee, puts down a dime for the lot and exits. We follow him down the street:

109 EXT. STREET

to a corner newsstand, where he stops to buy a morning paper. As he peruses it, he's approached by two large, clean-cut men in white skimmers.

MAN
Are you Lieutenant William Snyder?

SNYDER
I don't know, what's up?

MAN
F.B.I...Special Agent Polk'd like a few words with ya. Ya got a couple minutes? (X)

SNYDER
(completely floored)
Yeh, sure.

The two men show him to a waiting car.

CUT TO

110 INT. AN ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

Snyder stands in the middle of a dusty old machine room, surrounded by four or five Federal Agents. Visible around the room are several folding cots and portable lockers. The agents have obviously been quartered here temporarily. They all wear white skimmers, save for one, a portly man, Special Agent Polk, who paces the room smoking. There is something long-suffering about him, as if he wondered how he ever got in a service that thought white skimmers were classy. (X)

SNYDER
What is this? I got work to do.

POLK
Sit down and shut up, will ya. Try not to live up to all my expectations.
(not in the mood to screw around)
We were told you know a hustle artist named Johnny Hooker.

CONTINUED

110 CONTINUED

Snyder doesn't answer.

POLK
Do ya know him or don't ya?

SNYDER
Yeh, but I don't know where he is.

POLK
Well we do. He's chummin' around with a Big C named Henry Gondorff. Ring any bells?

SNYDER
Sure. Every bunco man in the country knows Gondorff.

POLK
There's word he's gonna run a con on the North Side here. We got a year-old Florida warrant on him, but it's a thin beef, and he can beat it in court unless we catch him cold. All we want you to do is pick up Hooker for us.

SNYDER
Why don't you pick him up yourself?

POLK
Cause the stoolies are used to street dicks jumpin' him. If word gets around that Feds are in on it too, Gondorff'll fold up the whole thing.

SNYDER
Wouldn't that be too bad. You'd hafta move outa this nice office ya got.

POLK
(enraged)
Don't crack wise to me, flatfoot. I spent a lotta time in dumps like this, eatin' Gondorff's dust while the bunco squad gets rich tippin' him off. But it's not gonna happen this time. We're not even gonna let the police know we're here. If you keep your mouth shut and do a job, there'll be some reward tricks in it for ya. And you better take it, cause I can make ya work for us without it. (X)

CONTINUED

110 CONTINUED - 2

SNYDER
What the hell good is Hooker to ya?

POLK
He's gonna set up Gondorff for us.

SYNDER
He'll never do it.

POLK
(self-satisfied)
I think he will.

CUT TO

111 INT. THE DRUGSTORE - DAY

Lonnegan sits by the phone, watching the clock and sipping a cup of coffee.

CUT TO

112 INT. THE STORE - DAY

Specifically, the small room from which Singleton does his race broadcasts. Singleton, himself, is hunched over the ticker machine, reading the print-out. Billie sits at the microphone table with a pencil and pad, ready to write.

SINGLETON
Visitation is still up by two at the three-quarters. Single Action second, Fasanella third.

BILLIE
What's the line on Visitation?

SINGLETON
(checking further up on the print-out sheet)
7 to 2. That ain't bad.

BILLIE
He'll probably fall down.

Gondorff appears at the doorway.

GONDORFF
How ya doin'?

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED

SINGLETON
(eyes still glued to the ticker)
Nothin' yet. I got a good one on the lead at Hialeah, but he's fadin'.

BILLIE
Best we had was Cat's Eye in the second at Del Mar, and he was only seven-to-two. Not many longshots comin' in today.

GONDORFF
We don't want big odds on this one, J.J. Take anything at five-to-two or under. And nothin' over four-to-one.

SINGLETON
Okay. Here we go.
(excited)
Billie. You ready?

Billie prepares to write on her pad.

BILLIE
Yeh, go ahead.

SINGLETON
At the finish, it's Single Action by two, Fasanella second, Visitation third.
(reading up the sheet again)
Line on Single Action...five-to-one. Hell with it, that's no good.

Billie crumples up the piece of paper she's been writing on and chucks it in a wastecan. Gondorff leaves the room, as (X) Singleton turns back to his vigil at the ticker.

SINGLETON
(a little weary)
Okay, the Fairfield Stakes at Santa Anita. Mile and a quarter for 3 year olds and up.

CUT TO

113 THE FLOOR AREA OF THE STORE

Everyone is in his place as before. Today, however, Curly Jackson is playing the part of the aging sport.

Well scrubbed and clean shaven, he cuts a dashing figure in his blue blazer and white pants. We go to Gondorff in the cashier's cage. He's talking to Niles, who's busy handing out fake bankrolls to members of the boost.

GONDORFF
He's gonna hit ya with 20 grand, Eddie. How much cash we got?

NILES
Not enough to cover a bet that big.

GONDORFF
Get a couple extra guys in the line, then. We'll give him the shut-out.

Niles nods.

CUT TO

114 INT. THE DRUGSTORE - DAY

Lonnegan is still waiting. He takes the 20 grand out of his coat pocket and thumbs through it, just to make sure it's all there.

CUT TO

115 INT. THE STORE - DAY

Singleton and Billie at the ticker again. Billie looks a little sleepy. Singleton is obviously involved with the progress of a race.

SINGLETON
Okay, Billie, here we go.

Billie snaps to and prepares to write as Singleton reads.

SINGLETON
At the wire it's Wrecking Crew the winner by five, Grand Theft second, Wingless third.
(reading up)
Wrecking Crew was...three-to-one.
(ripping the sheet out of the ticker)
That's our boy.

Billie and Singleton hustle out of the room.

116 EXT. ALLEY

We follow Billie through the store and across the alley to the building from which Twist keeps his lookout.

CUT BACK TO

117 INT. STORE

Gondorff, holding the ticker sheet Singleton has given him, emerges from the office and starts giving instructions to the boost.

GONDORFF
All right, Furey, your horse is Wingless. Paltrow, the Big Alabama and Phillips'll take Grand Theft. Rodgers and Eirie have Wrecking Crew. Jackson -- His Dandy, Cowan -- Change of Heart, Fiskin and Chappie -- Made to Order.
(pointing to the Eirie Kid)
Eirie, he gets a bang outa seein' you lose, so we oughta use that on 'em. If you play the birds of a feather routine we worked on, it should steam him up pretty good. You think you can handle that?

EIRIE
(a little nervous)
Yeh, sure.

GONDORFF
O.K., you guys in line take your time, and I wanta see lotsa joy on Wrecking Crew.

CUT TO

118 INT. TWIST'S ROOM - DAY

Billie enters and gives Twist the piece of paper she wrote the race results on. He picks up the phone and starts to dial.

CUT TO

119 INT. DRUGSTORE - DAY

The phone rings and Lonnegan answers it.

CONTINUED

119 CONTINUED

VOICE
Wrecking Crew at 4-1, Grand Theft to place, Made to Order to show.

Lonnegan smiles and hangs up the phone.

CUT TO

120 INT. STORE - DAY

Lonnegan's in line at the betting window. There are four people in front of him this time, and they are moving rather slowly. The "Last Flash" call is heard on the speakers.

LONNEGAN
(getting impatient)
C'mon, let's hurry up there.

The man at the head of the line turns around and gives Lonnegan a chilling look, as if he were beneath contempt. He puts down $25,000 on Grand Theft. The next man in line plunges down $30,000 on Wrecking Crew.

Just as Lonnegan is about to step to the window, Gondorff gives a quick signal to Singleton. The speakers come on.

CALLER
Ladies and Gentlemen, this is Arnold Rowe, your caller for the $100,000 Fairfield Stakes at Hollywood Park in Los Angeles. A mile and 3/8 for three year olds and up. And they're off!

LONNEGAN
(counting out his money)
Twenty-thousand on.... (X)

NILES
I'm sorry, sir. We can't take bets after the race is started.

He points to a sign above the window, which says exactly that. Lonnegan grabs up his money in disgust.

GONDORFF
Don't take it so hard, pal. You probably woulda lost it.

Lonnegan wanders over to the bar in a funk.

CONTINUED

120 CONTINUED

CALLER
And around the first turn it's Wrecking Crew by a half length, Grand Theft second by one, His Dandy is third by one half, followed by Change of Heart, Back Flip, Made to Order and High Ground.

The assembled patrons are once again thoroughly involved in the race. Eirie comes up to Lonnegan at the bar.

EIRIE
Who you got?

LONNEGAN
(half-heartedly)
I'm sitting this one out. (X)

EIRIE
I've got wrecking crew. Maybe it'll be my day. (X)

Lonnegan nods and wanders away. Hooker comes over to him.

HOOKER
What happened?

LONNEGAN
I didn't get the bet down in time.

HOOKER
(pissed)
Oh, Jesus.

CUT TO

121 INT. STORE OFFICE

Gondorff and Niles, back in the office.

NILES
(looking out at the floor)
Looks like he's sulking.

GONDORFF
If we're lucky, this'll bring him back stronger than ever.

CUT TO

122 THE FLOOR

CALLER
Coming for home, it's Wrecking Crew by six lengths, Made to Order is second by two and a half, High Ground is third by a length and Grand Theft is coming fast on the rail. It's Wrecking Crew, Made to Order and Grand Theft. Wrecking Crew wins it by five lengths, Grand Theft is second by a nose, Made to Order is third by two. Time for one and 3/8 mile, 2:11 and 4/10 seconds.

Eirie explodes in a joyous frenzy. He grabs Lonnegan by the shoulders and shakes him.

EIRIE
I won! I won! You hear that! (X)
I won 15,000! You hear that!

Yeh, Lonnegan heard that. Lonnegan shakes loose, grabs his coat and heads for the door.

123 EXT. ALLEY - DAY

He finds Hooker waiting for him outside.

LONNEGAN
Tell your friend I'll have the money here by post-time tomorrow. We'll take the first race where the odds are 4-1 or better. And make sure I can get to that window this time.

HOOKER
How am I gonna do that?

LONNEGAN
(coarsely)
I don't know, figure something out.

Lonnegan storms across the street to his waiting car and drives off. Hooker relaxes into a smile. He's already figured something out.

CUT TO

124 INT. SLEEZY DINER ACROSS FROM HOOKER'S APT. BLDG. - EVENING

Hooker sits at the counter finishing a plate of meat loaf. Loretta is down at the cash register, leaning on the counter,

124 CONTINUED

looking idly out into space. Hooker glances over at her every once in a while to see if she might be interested in striking up a little conversation. She's not. He finishes his meal and comes down to the register to pay his bill.

HOOKER
Meat loaf, apple pie and a cup of coffee.

LORETTA
(ringing it up)
Sixty-five.

Hooker gives her a dollar. She goes to the register for change.

HOOKER
What time you get off work here?

LORETTA
2:00 A.M.

HOOKER
You doin' anything tonight?

LORETTA
(handing him his change)
Yeh, sleepin'.

Hooker figures that's enough of that. He pockets his change and starts out the door, when suddenly he stops short.

124-A EXT. STREET

Across the street in a doorway is the silhouette of a man. It's Cole. He's pretending not to look at the diner, but Hooker isn't fooled.

124-B INT. DINER

He goes back to Loretta at the register.

HOOKER
You got a back door to this place?

LORETTA
No. What's wrong with the front?

CONTINUED

124-B CONTINUED

HOOKER
(urgently now)
Look, I don't have time to mess around. There's somebody out there I don't need to see. You got a fire escape or anything? (X)

LORETTA
No.

HOOKER
All right, do me a favor. Go into the bathroom, open the window and wait for me there.

LORETTA
What the hell for?

HOOKER
Just do what I tell ya and everything'll be jake.

Cracks of concern begin to appear in Loretta's marble.

LORETTA
What does this guy want?

HOOKER
(evenly)
He'd like to kill me.

Loretta just looks at him a second. Realizing that this is no joke, she turns and walks slowly but steadily to the bathroom. Hooker waits until she's out of sight.

125 EXT. STREET

Hooker goes to the front door and steps outside. Cole looks up at the sound of the door. Hooker makes a big show of spotting him, and runs back into the diner. Cole, his cover blown, draws his gun and races across the street in pursuit. Arriving just in time to see ---

126 INT. DINER

Hooker go into the bathroom, he charges in after him, only to find the place empty. He goes quickly from stall to stall, on the chance that Hooker might be hiding in one of them.

CONTINUED

126 CONTINUED

He comes to one that's closed, and seeing a pair of woman's legs under the door, rejects that, and moves on to the next one.

We cut inside the stall to reveal Loretta sitting on the toilet with her skirt hiked up. Right behind her, crouched on the back of the seat, is Hooker.

Cole has finished his rapid inspection now, and having found nothing, looks around for Hooker's probable escape route. He sees the open window and climbs out to find himself in a small air shaft, from which he knows Hooker could not escape. Hooker, seizing the time, bursts out of the stall and runs back out through the diner. Cole sees him, but too late to get off a shot. He climbs back in the window and gives chase.

127 EXT. STREET

We pick up Hooker barreling down the street with Cole a hundred yards or so behind. Hooker makes a sharp cut into an alley, and we see immediately that it's a hopeless dead end. Inexplicably, he makes no attempt to run back out.

Cole draws up and cuts into the alley, anticipating the kill which should be easy now. He prepares to sight down his victim, when suddenly he realizes there is no victim in sight. Hooker, miraculously, has vanished. Cole scans the alley frantically for some trace of him. There are no windows or doors at the street level. Not even a drain pipe. Just brick wall. It's impossible. Hooker has disappeared into thin air.

Cole slams his gun into his shoulder holster with a curse, and starts back out of the alley, when all of a sudden he stops in utter terror. His mouth drops open and he chokes out the words:

COLE
Salino, hey look. I didn't mean to move in on....

Before anything else can come out, two bullets rip into his chest. He falls to the concrete, coming to rest on a manhole cover, which we notice is slightly ajar. We:

CUT TO

128 THE SEWER PIPES

beneath the manhole. We see Hooker making his way through the slop, having gained another reprieve, but unaware that with two down, there is still one to go.

CUT TO

129 INT. HOOKER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

Hooker comes in the front entrance and goes to the elevator, one of the old-fashioned kind with the iron grid on the inside. He's still a little rattled and waiting for the elevator is making him restless. It finally arrives, and he steps inside, closing the grid behind him. As he starts to push the button for his floor, he realizes for the first time that he's not alone. He looks to the corner to find Snyder, holding a gun on him. This time there's not much doubt that he'll use it if necessary.

HOOKER (X)
Hey there, Snyder. Long time no see.

CUT TO

130 INT. THE ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - EVENING

Snyder brings Hooker into the crate room where Special Agent (X) Polk and the other Agents are waiting. Polk, as usual, has his coat off, revealing his shoulder holster.

POLK
Hello, Mr. Hooker. Special Agent (X)
Polk, F.B.I...
(shoving a chair
over to him)
Have a seat.

Hooker remains standing.

POLK
(ignoring it,
drinking from
a cup)
You want a drink or something?

HOOKER
No.

POLK
We want to talk to ya about Henry
Gondorff.

HOOKER
Don't think I know him.

POLK
Well give yourself a couple seconds, crumb. You wouldn't wanna
lie to me. Lt. Snyder here says
you done a lotta confidence work (X)
in his town.

HOOKER
Lt. Snyder doesn't know shit.

CONTINUED

130 CONTINUED

Capt. Polk almost laughs, but he checks it.

HOOKER
You got nothin' on me.

POLK
We'll get it, and if we can't, we'll just make it up. Grand larceny, extortion,
(with special emphasis)
counterfeiting, anything you want.

Hooker says nothing, but it's not from defiance now. He's beginning to get the picture.

POLK
Look, I got nothin' against you, but you're in trouble here. All you gotta do is tell us when Gondorff's gonna play his chump. We come in at the sting, make the pinch, and you walk out free as a bird. No questions, no court appearance, nothing.

HOOKER
No.

POLK
You've already done time twice, and judges don't like three time losers. You wanna sit in the can for forty years, startin' tonight?

HOOKER
I'll make parole.

POLK
Like hell. You won't even get a review till you're seventy. (X)

HOOKER (X)
(softly)
I'll chance it.

Polk pauses for a moment, then seems resigned. (X)

POLK (X)
Okay, if that's the way you want it. We might even provide you with a little company on the way up the river. That wife of Luther Coleman's -- What was her name, Snyder?

CONTINUED

130 CONTINUED - 2

SNYDER
Alva.

Hooker's head snaps up and he regards Polk with veiled loathing.

POLK
That's it. Alva Coleman. Quite a grifter in her time, I hear. Snyder says he's got quite a dossier on her. Nothing major by itself, but put 'em together and it could add up to a lotta years.

HOOKER
You stink, Polk.

POLK
C'mon, don't be a sap. It's not her I want. I don't care if you're too dumb to save yourself, but there's no sense draggin' everybody else down with ya.
(pause)
It's all over, Hooker. You can save me a lotta trouble, but I'm gonna get Henry Gondorff whether you help me out or not.

Hooker's thoroughly whipped. He sits down for the first time.

HOOKER
(softly)
Will you wait until the chump is played?

POLK
Hell yes. We don't care about the mark. He deserves what he gets.

HOOKER
(with heat)
I mean completely played. Until he's beat and the score is taken. You come in before we beat him and I'll kill him. You'll have a tough time explaining that, won't ya.

POLK
All right, Hooker, but you take it on the lam, and we'll shoot you down on sight.

HOOKER
(barely audible)
Just as long as I get to finish the play.

CUT TO

131 INT. GONDORFF'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gondorff and Hooker are playing gin rummy and drinking. Gondorff makes little comments as he plays, but Hooker is quiet and withdrawn. The carousel is not in operation and a heavy silence hangs over the place.

GONDORFF
What's the matter, kid? You're not sayin' much.

HOOKER
Just a little nervous, that's all.

GONDORFF
Luther always told me to bite my toenails when I got nervous. You see yourself doin' that and you realize it ain't worth it.

Hooker smiles feebly.

Billie appears at the door.

BILLIE
Things are a little slow tonight, Henry. I wanna open the round for the girls.

Gondorff takes out a set of keys and tosses them to her. She leaves to go start the merry-go-round. Gondorff settles back into the game.

GONDORFF
Take it easy, you won't lose him now. We had him 10 years ago when he decided to be somebody. Believe me, I've seen enough to know.

HOOKER
(softly)
How many guys you conned in your life, Henry?

GONDORFF
Two or three hundred I guess. Sometimes played two a day when I was in Shea's mob. We had it down to a business.
(pause)
'Course Chicago was a right town then. The fix was in. The dicks took their end without a beef. All the Wall Street boys wanted to make investments for us. Even had marks looking us up, thinkin' they could beat the game.

CONTINUED

131 CONTINUED

GONDORFF (Cont'd)
(pause)
Yeh, kid, it really stunk. No sense in bein' a grifter if it's the same as bein' a citizen.

Gondorff chucks his cards on the table. He's through for the night.

GONDORFF
I better do some packin'. I'm gonna be a hot number again after tomorrow.

HOOKER
Then why you doin' it?

GONDORFF
Seems worthwhile, doesn't it? Maybe it's just for the cave-in on Lonnegan's face when we put in the sting.

That's good enough. Hooker gets up to leave.

HOOKER
Henry.

GONDORFF
Yeh.

HOOKER
(apologetically)
I appreciate your stickin' your neck out. I wouldn't have asked ya if it weren't for Luther.

GONDORFF
Ain't nothin' gonna make up for Luther, kid.
(pause)
Revenge is for suckers. I been griftin' 30 years and never got any.

Hooker just nods and walks out the door.

132 INT. CAROUSEL

We follow him past the Carousel which is now full of giggling prostitutes in various stages of undress. Their childish frolicking is charming from a group usually so jaded, but it's lost on Hooker tonight.

CUT TO

133 EXT. A CITY STREET - NIGHT

It's late now and the street is deserted save for an occasional derelict or streetwalker on her way home from a night's work. We pick up Hooker coming down the street toward his apartment building. He walks slowly, almost reluctantly, as if he didn't care whether he ever got there or not.

As he nears his building, he notices Loretta coming out of the diner across the street. He stops and watches as she looks up and disappears into an adjacent building that advertises rooms for rent. After a few seconds, we see a light come on in one of its second story windows.

Hooker just stands there a second, debating with himself, trying to figure out a reason for doing what he's going to do anyway. We follow him across the street to Loretta's building and:

134 INT. LORETTA'S

He goes up the stairs to the room where the light came on. He passes a couple of derelicts on the way. He knocks twice and Loretta answers in her bathrobe. She is more than a little startled to see him.

LORETTA
Looks like he missed ya.

HOOKER
Yeh, this time anyway.

Loretta notices an old busybody peeping out at them from her room across the hall.

LORETTA
Good night, Mrs. Hillard.

Mrs. Hillard quickly closes her door.

HOOKER
(shuffling a little)
I, ah...thought you might wanna come out for a while. Maybe have a drink or somethin'.

LORETTA
You move right along, don't ya.

HOOKER
(with more innocence than confidence)
I don't mean nothin' by it. I just don't know many regular girls, that's all.

CONTINUED

134 CONTINUED

LORETTA
And you expect me to come out, just like that.

HOOKER
If I expected somethin', I wouldn't be still standin' out here in the hall.

Loretta looks at him carefully. She knows it's not a line.

LORETTA
(with less resist-
ance now)
I don't even know you.

HOOKER
(slowly)
You know me. I'm just like you... It's two in the morning and I don't know nobody.

The two just stand there in silence a second. There's nothing more to say. She stands back and lets him in.

CUT TO

135 INT. GONDORFF'S ROOM - NIGHT

A record spinning lazily on an old phonograph. We hear Robert Johnson's "Come On In My Kitchen." Gondorff is sitting up in bed, with his hat on, lost in thought. Billie is curled up asleep next to him. There's a packed suitcase next to the bed. Billie wakes up and turns over a second.

CUT TO

136 INT. GONDORFF'S ROOM

BILLIE
C'mon Henry, knock off. You've done everything you can.

Gondorff nods his agreement like a zombie and goes right on thinking.

CUT TO

137 LORETTA'S ROOM

Hooker and Loretta are asleep against each other, their bodies illuminated every few seconds by the light from a neon sign across the street. We dolly to the window and move in on another window in the building next door. There's no light on in it, but we can discern the basic outline of a face behind the curtains, which are slightly parted to afford a view of Hooker's room by a black-gloved hand.

"I said come on in my kitchen
'Cause it's gonna be rainin' outdoors."

Music ends.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

T H E S T I N G

FADE OUT

FADE IN

138 INT. LORETTA'S ROOM - MORNING

We open on Hooker in bed, the morning sun streaming in on his face. He awakens slowly, looks at the ceiling for a second and, remembering last night, turns to the side to find that Loretta is no longer there. Still drowsy, he gets out of bed and looks around the room for a note or some evidence of her continued presence. He opens an empty closet, then opens empty drawers. Finding nothing, he suddenly hits on another possibility, and looks in his wallet. The money is still there. Almost disappointed, he slumps down in a chair, as the harsh reality of what will happen this day floods back in on him. Music begins and we:

CUT TO

139 INT. AN UNKNOWN LOCATION - DAY

We see the black-gloved hand opening a small wooden box. Wrapped inside is a shiny black revolver, at this point in two pieces. The hand reaches in and takes them out.

CUT TO

140 INT. THE SLEEZY DINER - DAY

Hooker is poking at a plate of waffles and sausage. The waitress on duty is not Loretta and Hooker has noticed.

CUT TO

141 INT. GONDORFF'S ROOM - DAY

Gondorff is standing in front of the bathroom mirror, putting on his tuxedo. He goes to his dresser, pulls out a very small gun and tucks it in his cummerbund.

CUT TO

142 THE GUNMAN'S ROOM AGAIN

The hand swirls a pipe cleaner inside the barrel of the revolver and picks some lint out of the chamber. He then screws the barrel onto the body. This is all seen in closeup.

CUT TO

143 HOOKER'S ROOM AGAIN

Hooker now has his tuxedo on. He takes two small rubber bladders out of a crawer and puts them in his pocket.

CUT TO

144 INT. LONNEGAN'S SUITE - DAY

Lonnegan paces nervously around the room, looking at the clock. Obviously waiting for something, he's getting extremely impatient.

CUT TO

145 THE GUNMAN'S ROOM AGAIN

We watch the hand carefully loading bullets into the chamber of the revolver.

CUT TO

146 INT. THE CAROUSEL BUILDING - DAY

Gondorff emerges from his room carrying his suitcase. He stops and looks up at the mezzanine where Billie is standing. They smile sadly at each other and give a simple wave, having done this too many times to get sentimental about it now. Gondorff walks out of the building.

CUT TO

147 HOOKER'S ROOM AGAIN

Hooker is busily stuffing all his possessions in a paper bag, lumping clothes with food, records and toilet articles.

CUT TO

148 LONNEGAN'S SUITE AGAIN

Lonnegan goes to the door to admit Floyd and two assistants, one of whom carries a large brief case. Lonnegon takes the brief case to a table and opens it. Inside is a half million dollars in cash.

CUT TO

149 THE GUNMAN'S ROOM AGAIN

We see the hand putting a silencer on the revolver. The gunman puts the revolver up to his eye to check the alignment and for the first time we see the face that goes with the hand. It is fully as menacing as we had imagined: Broad, flat nose, thick cracked lips, narrow eyes and cauliflower ears.

CUT TO

150 HOOKER'S ROOM AGAIN

Hooker is on the phone now.

151 INT. WAREHOUSE

We see that he's talking to Captain Polk. Snyder listens also.

151-A HOOKER'S ROOM

Hooker finishes the conversation, hangs up and goes to take one last look at himself in the mirror. Finding everything in order, he grabs up his sack of possessions and leaves the room.

152 EXT. HOOKER'S APARTMENT

We pick him up emerging from the building, and follow him around the corner to a secluded alley which he generally takes on his way to the store. As he walks along, he notices Loretta coming toward him from the other end. She's wearing a coat, obviously on her way somewhere. As she comes closer, we move to reveal the gunman appearing suddenly in the alley behind and to the right of Hooker.

153 EXT. ALLEYWAY

The gunman quickly takes out his revolver, braces it in the crook of his hand, and takes careful aim. Loretta sees him. The gunman fires. Loretta falls dead on the asphalt.

Hooker spins around in confusion. The gunman moves quickly toward him. Hooker starts to back up but the gunman stops when he gets to Loretta. He kicks her over to reveal a gun under her body.

GUNMAN
She was gonna kill ya, kid.

Hooker is stunned. He can't believe it.

GUNMAN
(dragging the body over behind a trash can)
Her name's Loretta Salino. Lonnegan's people set her up in the diner. C'mon, let's get outa here.

Hooker wants to stay and try to figure it all out, but the gunman drags him away.

CUT TO

154 INT. THE ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

Polk, Snyder and several federal agents are busy putting on their shoulder holsters, and checking their weapons.

CONTINUED

154 CONTINUED

POLK
(to Snyder)
We got a tip that Gondorff's playin' for some New York wheel. As soon as we're inside, I want you to get the guy outa there as fast as possible, before the reporters show up. We can't afford to embarrass any big shots. (X)

Snyder nods.

CUT TO

155 EXT. LONNEGAN'S HOTEL - DAY

Lonnegan, carrying the brief case personally, is seen getting into his limousine. Four assistants get in with him.

CUT TO

156 INT. THE STORE - DAY

Gondorff enters the store carrying his suitcase. Several of the boost are already there. Gondorff clasps his hands to generate a little enthusiasm. He's obviously up for this one.

CUT TO

157 INT. A TAXI CAB - DAY

Hooker sits in the back seat with the gunman right next to him. He's still very uneasy with this man.

HOOKER
She coulda killed me last night.

GUNMAN
Too many people coulda seen ya go in her room. She was a professional. Used to work in the Dutch Schultz gang.

HOOKER
Who are you?

GUNMAN
Gondorff asked me to look after ya.

HOOKER
How do I know you're tellin' the truth.

CONTINUED

157 CONTINUED

GUNMAN
Don't have much choice, do ya?

We go to Hooker. No, he doesn't.

CUT TO

158 EXT. THE ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

We pick up Polk, Snyder and the other federal agents coming out of the warehouse in their white skimmers, and piling into cars.

CUT TO

159 THE STORE AGAIN

Niles is busily spreading "boodles" all over the cashier's area. Singleton checks his microphone. It works fine. He checks it again.

CUT TO

160 LONNEGON IN HIS LIMOUSINE

He holds the brief case in his lap, his fingers tapping lightly on it.

CUT TO

161 THE STORE AGAIN

Hooker and the gunman enter and go over to Gondorff, who breaks into a wide smile. Hooker returns it halfheartedly, still ill at ease about what has happened.

CUT TO

162 THE F.B.I. CARS ON THEIR WAY

There are four or five driving in a column. Snyder and Polk ride together in the back of the lead car.

CUT TO

163 EXT. THE DRUGSTORE - DAY

Lonnegan's limousine pulls up outside, and the bodyguards pile out.

CUT TO

164 THE STORE AGAIN

Gondorff, Hooker and the others waiting, the tension expressed their faces.

165 INT. THE DRUGSTORE - DAY

Lonnegan sits tensely in the usual booth. He keeps both hands firmly planted on the brief case. The phone rings and Lonnegan goes to it. Music ends.

VOICE
Place it on Syphon at four to one. (X)

Lonnegan hangs up with the look of the financial killer. Eight to one odds is more than even he could have hoped for.

166 EXT. STREET

We follow Lonnegan across the street and into the store. The bodyguards remain outside.

167 INT. STORE

The store is buzzing with activity. Money and booze are everywhere. The sheet writer and the boardmarker can hardly keep up with the action. Lonnegan walks quickly to the betting line and finds to his relief that there's only one man ahead of him. The man puts $25,000 on King's Image.

Lonnegan steps to the window, swings up the brief case, and opens it for Niles to see.

LONNEGAN
(straight-faced)
Five hundred grand on Syphon.

Niles is struck dumb. He's never seen that much money before.

NILES
(playing the flustered clerk)
Hold on, I'll have to get the manager.

Niles goes and returns with Gondorff.

GONDORFF
What's the problem?

CONTINUED

167 CONTINUED

NILES
(pointing to the brief case)
He wants to put a half million on Syphon.

Gondorff looks at the money a second and then looks up at Lonnegan like he's gotta be crazy.

GONDORFF
(uneasily)
I can't lay that off in time. We lose a bet that big, it could break us.

LONNEGAN
(challenging)
If ya win it could make ya, too.

GONDORFF
(to Niles)
What are the odds on Syphon?

NILES
Four to one.. (X)

Gondorff looks at Lonnegan long and hard.

GONDORFF
A half mill on an four to one shot. (X)
You're dumber than I thought, Lonnegan.

LONNEGAN
You're more gutless than I thought.

The words "Last Flash" are heard on the speaker. Gondorff looks at Lonnegan with utter contempt. He turns to Niles.

GONDORFF
(chopped)
Take it.

Niles hurriedly writes out a slip for 500,000 dollars. Lonnegan, allowing himself a sly smile, picks it up and retires to a near-by table. He flashes a little okay sign to Hooker who acknowledges it with a nod.

CALLER
Ladies and gentlemen, this is Arnold Rowe, your caller for the San Antonio Handicap at Pimlico in Baltimore -- A mile and 1/16 for three-year-olds. And they're off.

CONTINUED

167 CONTINUED - 2

Lonnegan takes a deep breath and leans forward in his chair, the larceny boiling in his veins. Hooker looks to Gondorff. Gondorff gives him the "office." Hooker has to smile.

CALLER
And around the first turn it's King's Image by a neck, Syphon is second by one, Key to the Vault third by one half, followed by Mr. Moonlight, Red Ridge, Moneyman and No Charge.

Unexpectedly, Kid Twist bursts in through the entrance. Barely able to control his enthusiasm, he hurries over to Lonnegan's table and sits down next to him.

TWIST
Sorry, but I just couldn't wait. Did everything go all right?

LONNEGAN
(motioning for him to keep his voice down)
Take it easy. Everything's all right. I put it on Syphon, on the nose.

TWIST
(in utter horror)
On the nose! I said place. Place it on Syphon. That horse is going to run second.

Lonnegan looks like he's just been stabbed. He vaults over the table to the teller's window and grabs Niles.

LONNEGAN
You give me my goddamn money back! You hear me? There's been a mistake!

NILES
I'm sorry, sir. The betting's closed.

Lonnegan begins to shake him violently.

LONNEGAN
You give me my money back. There's been a mistake, do you hear me?

Gondorff leaps to Niles' aid when suddenly there is a crash at the entrance door, and Polk, Snyder and eight federal agents burst into the room, guns drawn. The place falls

CONTINUED

167 CONTINUED - 3

silent except for the loudspeaker, the members of the boost afraid to move. Gondorff and Niles look at each other wondering how this could have possibly happened.

POLK
(motioning to Hooker)
All right, Hooker, you can go.

Hooker's eyes go to Gondorff, who looks back at him in utter disbelief, the betrayal raging in his features. Hooker, unable to meet his gaze, lowers his head and starts to walk out. Almost unnoticed, there's a flash of movement at Gondorff's belt. A small gun. A shot. Hooker clutches his back and falls dead on the floor, the blood spurting from his mouth. Polk, reacting instantly, pours four shots into Gondorff, who goes down in a heap. Pandemonium breaks loose. The members of the boost race for the door. Lonnegan is totally stunned. First he lost his money and now he's involved in a murder. Snyder rushes over to him.

SNYDER
C'mon. We gotta get you outa here.

168 EXT. STREET

Snyder drags him through the crowd and out onto the street where an F.B.I. car is waiting. His bodyguards have long since fled at the sight of the F.B.I. men.

LONNEGAN
My money's back there.

SNYDER
We'll worry about that later.

Snyder gets in beside Lonnegan, and the car speeds away.

CUT TO

169 INSIDE THE STORE AGAIN

The pandemonium has now ceased. Those who could escape have; the rest are lined up against the wall in frisking position. Gondorff and Hooker lie on the floor dead. The loudspeaker drones on. Singleton is still calling the race from his booth, apparently oblivious to what's happened.

CALLER
And the winner is King's Image by four lengths, Syphon is second, by two, Moneyman third by two and one half. Time for 1 and 1/16 miles, 1:21 and 2/10 seconds.

CONTINUED

169 CONTINUED

Polk walks slowly over to Hooker's body and bends down.

POLK
He's gone.

Hooker opens his eyes and slowly drags himself up off the floor, spitting out a little rubber bladder, filled with blood, that he's had in his mouth. Gondorff does likewise. Niles, Twist, Singleton and the rest of the boost begin to laugh and shake hands, as do the Federal Agents.

GONDORFF
(to Polk)
Nice con, Hickey. I thought you were Feds myself, when you first came in.

HICKEY
No problem, Henry. Snyder went for it all the way.
(laughing)
You shoulda seen the rag he lit under Lonnegan.

Gondorff turns to the others.

GONDORFF
Okay, let's take this place apart and get outa here. You can get your splits from Eddie at Boudreau's to-night.

Gondorff walks over to Hooker, who's wiping the blood off his face and hands.

GONDORFF
You beat him, kid.

HOOKER
(softly)
You were right, Henry. It's not enough...But it's close.

GONDORFF
You wanta wait for your share?

HOOKER
Naw, I'd just blow it.

Gondorff nods, and walks slowly to behind the bar. He comes out with his suitcase in one hand and Hooker's paper bag in another. He throws the paper bag to Hooker, who stops by

CONTINUED

169 CONTINUED - 2

the door. Eirie Kid is standing there. Hooker gives the "office" to Eirie, who beams and gives it back.

170 EXT. ALLEY AND STREET

Then Hooker and Gondorff leave. We hold on them, two ragtail grifters again as they walk off down the street and disappear around the corner.

FADE OUT

THE END